

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications
and other research outputs

When Dyspraxia Meets Dyslexia At 11+

Thesis

How to cite:

Bolton, Sylvia (2002). When Dyspraxia Meets Dyslexia At 11+. EdD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2001 The Author

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00004dd6>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

NAME: Sylvia Bolton

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER: MO291727

“WHEN DYSPRAXIA MEETS DYSLEXIA AT 11+”

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

SUBMITTED: 28th September 2001

LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
Thanks	1
Abstract	2
List of Figures	3
List of Appendices	4
Preface	5
Introduction	6
Chapter 1. Education in Northern Ireland	39
Chapter 2. Developmental Dyspraxia	51
Chapter 3. Faltering Steps (A study in early development)	68
Chapter 4. Meeting the Parents	105
Chapter 5. The Experience of the Transfer	125
Chapter 6. The Findings and the Research Question	164
Reflections	182
References	185
List of Appendices	203
Appendices	204

THANKS

My sincere appreciation to the parents for the gift of the words that made the completion of this study possible.

May your road rise up to meet you and the sun always shine on your face.

(Irish Proverb)

To Dr. Spencer of the Open University for her expertise, kindness and understanding.

To my daughter, Stephanie, and my friend, Jo Calder for proofreading.

To Desi, my husband, Stephanie and Graeme, my children, and Nina and Sam, my dogs, for their support throughout.

(Meals will now be served without a helping of Foucault!)

DEDICATION

For Graeme

This one is for **You**

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of five families as their children transfer from primary to secondary school, and is based on the words of the parents. The sample children live and attend school in different parts of Northern Ireland and each carries a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia and has been identified within school as having special educational needs. The study is based on the words of the parents.

The research strategy employed was experiential case study. An emancipatory approach was followed using face-to-face unstructured interviews to generate data. Analysis began after the first data collection and was progressive. This facilitated the desire for depth as opposed to width and allowed for issues to emerge from the data.

Analysis is from a Foucauldian perspective. Within the text I discuss the relevance of Foucault's discourses to the construction of the identity. I describe how it is my understanding that both professionals and parents are limited by the identities inscribed on the political surface of their body by disciplinary power. This inscription tends individuals to conformity to the single truth of the dominant power through hierarchical observation, normalisation and the examination. I argue that power is weighted in favour of the professionals. However, I assert that this weighting is not because of professional expertise in its own right, but rather comes from the administrative role that professionals fulfil within the bureaucracy of the State. Finally, as I found Foucault's philosophies wanting in terms of resistance to the inscription of identity, I turn to the writings of Deleuze and Guattari and their concept of 'becoming other' as a means to empowerment.

The study is based in the area of parent/professional partnership.

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 The Transfer Calendar 1999/2000	49
Figure 1.2 Grade Awards – Transfer Procedure 1999/2000	50
Figure 2.1 Key Features of Clumsy Child Syndrome as Described by Gubbay	52
Figure 3.1 Research Definitions as Used in this Study	69
Figure 3.2 Research Diary Entry 23 rd May 1998	70
Figure 3.3 The Research Title as at Research Proposal (February 1998)	71
Figure 3.4 The Research Question as at Research Proposal (February 1998)	71
Figure 3.5 Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies	87
Figure 3.6 The Research Diary	98
Figure 4.1 Letter to Dyspraxia Foundation Management Committee	106
Figure 4.2 Letter to Membership of Dyspraxia Foundation	108
Figure 4.3 Information Sheet for Parents	109

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
1.1 Statutory Framework for Education in N.Ireland	204
1.2 Education and Library Boards	204
1.3 School Categories and Compulsory School Ages	205
1.4 The Transfer Tests	207
1.5 Admission Criteria	207
1.6 The Transfer Report Form	208
1.7 Special Arrangements within the Transfer Procedure	209
Tests	
2.1 Primary Reflexes	210
2.2 Specific Learning Difficulties: – Code of Practice	210
N.I. (1998)	
4.1 Example Interview Notes and Analysis	212
5.1 Random Example of Local Newspaper Coverage of Open Days/Nights 2000	213

PREFACE

This study covers a period of just over two years in the lives of parents of five children, who live and attend school in different parts of Northern Ireland. For the purposes of this study, the important commonalties are that each child carries a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia and is transferring from primary to secondary school.

The study is based on the words of the parents of these children. It is an attempt to understand the reality of the transfer from primary to secondary school, as lived through by these families. It is a search of an understanding of human experience, in the vein of what Von Wright (1971) called experiential case study.

The document is written and presented as an autobiographical journey. There is no separate chapter devoted to methods and methodology as such concerns are subsumed within the narrative, as they occur in the unfolding story. My personal experiences, thoughts and reflections are included within the chronicle.

Schostak (1996) writes that no knowledge is so encompassing that it ever explains reality, and I would not be so arrogant as to assume otherwise. I readily acknowledge the narrow focus of this study; based as it is on the words of the parents (Edwards & Furlong, 1983), and that another researcher would most likely present the same reality with a different emphasis. This is but my interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

I was ten, going on eleven, when I sat the qualifying exam in 1961. I remember little of the tests. What I do recall is the tap tap of the metal tips of the invigilator's shoes, as he walked ... up and down, up and down.... between the rows of desks. My mother, who left school at fourteen to start work in a factory, recalls worrying that I would not do my best, that I would miss out on a 'good education'.

I 'got the qually'. There was no talk of school choice. I was a girl and I was a Protestant. I was enrolled as a day pupil in Londonderry High School, the local grammar school for young ladies. It was just the way that things were, the familiar. Protestant girls went to 'The High School', Roman Catholic girls to 'Thornhill', Protestant boys to 'Foyle' and Roman Catholic boys to 'St Columb's'.

My daughter, Stephanie, was ten going on eleven, when she sat the transfer tests in 1987. She recalls little of the tests, except that she enjoyed doing them. I remember worrying that she would not do her best, that she would miss out on a grammar school education.

Stephanie got her grammar school place. Where we lived meant that there was a choice of school, a choice, that is, between schools within the Protestant tradition. This was just the way things were, the familiar.

In his discussion of structuration, Giddens (1976) describes us as actors inserted into historically constructed situations, "*draw[ing] upon resources and depend[ing] upon conditions of which [we] are unaware or which [we] perceive only dimly*" (Giddens, 1976, p. 157).

Both as pupil and mother, I lived out the social requirements of the transfer procedures. Beyond this, I knew and expected to know little. My thoughts and concerns operated at a personal level, and were limited by the boundaries of the private orbit in which I lived – school, family, friends ... (Mills, 1959). In both situations, I knew all that I needed to know in order to ‘go on’ in the routines of social life as dictated by my immediate circumstances (Giddens, 1997). I was aware that there were happenings, past and present, outside my personal world, but I did not make a connection between these and what was happening in my life. The script of the familiar was adequate for me to play my part.

In September 1993, my son, Graeme, who carries a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia (Chapter 2), began his last year at primary school. He could neither sit the Transfer Tests nor take part in the Transfer Procedures because he was the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (The Education Order (NI) 1986) (Education in Northern Ireland is outlined in Chapter 1). Eleven-year old Graeme was placed, in compliance with statementing legislation, as a boarder in a grammar school, within the Protestant tradition, seventy miles from our home.

This time the familiar did not provide an adequate script for me to act out my part. The cosiness of the familiar was shaken, and to ‘go on’ I found that I had to ask questions about the impersonal; the network of social processes outside my own personal immediacy. Somehow and somewhere in the midst of this enforced sociological thinking, this study was conceived.

When I read Jennifer Nias’s reflexive account of her longitudinal research into teachers’ lives, life histories and careers (Nias, 1993), I connected with the description of how her research had been dominated by accident and opportunity and had started almost by chance. So it was with this study. The early stirrings had no recognisable form, there was merely a ‘need to know’ for myself as a mother. From this grew the ‘need to connect’ with the

experiences of others and finally there came a 'need to tell' to a wider audience.

I emphasise that, in my life with Graeme, this 'need to know' was not a new phenomenon that appeared with the transfer from primary to secondary school. Rather, it was another 'need to know' in a catalogue stretching back to his birth. In Smith (1997), a mother compares life with a child with a disability to being hit by an express train. The engine hit me first, when Graeme was just under two and the doctor made a provisional diagnosis of 'minimal brain dysfunction'. I was totally unprepared for this diagnosis as his presenting symptoms were related to feeding difficulties and recurrent chest infections and, as far as I was aware, there had been no delay in his meeting of the major motor milestones. However, the diagnosis was affirmed a few months later, when the first coach struck with Graeme's failure to develop speech. The second coach closely followed when he failed to learn the self-help skills required for beginning school . . . and so it went . . . and still goes . . . on.

Often, I was still recovering from the impact of a previous coach (or coaches), when the next one hit. The 'secondary emotional' coach, for example, which brought asthma, stomach pains and depression did not wait until Graeme could speak, read or write. It just arrived and brought with it more professionals, more appointments and more bureaucracy.

The trauma caused by the impact of some coaches appeared transitory. For instance, the 'failure to talk' coach hit hard, but with input from speech and language therapy and hours of practising at home, Graeme learnt to talk. I felt included in the remediation and, to my then perception, a cure had been effected. However, other coaches, such as the 'statementing' coach and the 'transfer' coach, left within my consciousness unresolved issues and unhealed wounds. With these I was part of the process, but I never felt included. I did sign and agree to Graeme's statement and I did agree to his placement in boarding school, but I did so with great concern and

misgivings about the compromises I was making. My agreement with the decisions of professionals stemmed from a belief that I had reached a stage of negotiation where no other choice was realistic or possible; a viewpoint also expressed by some of the parents in Armstrong's research into the role of parents in special needs assessments (Armstrong, 1995).

Daniel Goleman (1998) writes:

"To belong to a group of any sort, the tacit price of membership is to agree not to notice one's own feelings of uneasiness and misgiving, and certainly not to do anything that challenges the group's way of doing things."

(p.12)

Graeme was very unhappy at boarding school. The educational psychologist said that he would get over it and suggested that I was perhaps too emotionally involved to make appropriate decisions. However, I could not ignore the feelings of unease and misgiving that I felt when I witnessed his unhappiness. In October 1995 I challenged the group's way of doing things. I removed Graeme from school and took my first steps to becoming a home educator. (Graeme, eighteen in June 2001, completed his secondary education at home.)

The 'need to connect' with the experience of others was partly met by membership of the Dyspraxia Foundation and partly by my studies with the Open University. The former provided contact with parents of children with dyspraxia and the latter, in particular *E242: Learning for All* (The Open University, 1992a) and *E806: Applied Studies in Learning Difficulties in Education* (The Open University, 1992b), contact with teachers and other professionals involved in the education of children with special educational needs.

I came to these Open University courses in professional development feeling very much an outsider. My professional training was in clinical biochemistry and, after qualifying, I had been employed for sixteen years in hospital pathology. Throughout these years I was dogged with ill-health, and in 1989 I was forced to retire on the grounds of ill-health. I had no experience of working in or delivering education and I had no professional designs in this area. I sought personal as opposed to professional development. I wanted to be party to the insider knowledge and the 'education speak', as I considered that I lacked power, as defined by the professionals (Garner & Sandow, 1995).

In his memoir, *'Tis*, Frank McCourt (2000) describes how, as a young man, he felt unable to speak to priests:

"All I knew about priests was that they said Mass and everything else in Latin, that they heard my sins in English and forgave me in Latin When you know Latin and forgive sins it makes you hard to talk to because you know the dark secrets of the world."

(p. 8)

In a similar fashion I found the educational professionals hard to talk to. I addressed them in 'parent speak' but they talked back to me in 'education speak', and I perceived that behind this jargon lay the seemingly 'dark secrets' of special education. In contrast, when I spoke with medical professionals there were no 'dark secrets'. This was my jargon and my *"language of privilege"* (Corbett, 1996, p. 79) (Page 171).

I learnt some 'education speak', picked up some insider knowledge, made some friends and gained a Masters in Education. I was still a parent, but now I also had a recognised qualification in education. I took on the role of educational advisor to the Dyspraxia Foundation in Northern Ireland and also began to deliver, on a freelance basis, teacher-training courses in

specific learning difficulties for the Education and Library Boards.
(Appendix 1.2)

Within the Dyspraxia Foundation, I spoke openly with parents about my personal experiences as the mother of a child with dyspraxia, but when lecturing and speaking to educational professionals, it was a different story. I structured my discourse in such a way that this aspect of my personal was invisible. I desperately wanted to tell this professional audience what it was like to be the parent of a child with dyspraxia. However, my grounding in science veered me towards the scientific tale, in which the teller is 'everywhere but nowhere' (Sparkes, 1995), and I reasoned that it was unprofessional to speak of the personal. Corbett (1996, pp. 81 - 82) offers another explanation for my wanting invisibility when she writes that "*the fear of appearing 'odd' makes individuals seek invisibility*". It is true that I did not seek invisibility from the membership of the Dyspraxia Foundation. There I was confident with my insider knowledge and the language of the parents. As a lecturer I was reasonably confident with my learned knowledge and the language of education, but I was afraid that I would be exposed as 'a parent' and thus appear 'odd'. I feared that, with such exposure, my voice would again be silenced.

Corbett (1996) writes that 'coming out' can be extremely threatening and stressful and continues by adding:

"The powerful, with the confidence of authority, are in a position to proffer power of expression; the powerless have their faltering attempts at speaking new languages (i.e., the language of those in power) exposed as inept and confused."

(p.82)

I find this an apt description of how I viewed the professionals at this time. I knew and understood that, within this group, there were professionals who

were also parents, but this was overshadowed by my perception that these people had power (denoted by their superior knowledge) and authority (signified by their position within the education system). Further, I feared that for speaking out I would in some way be punished. I worried for instance that the statementing officer would use the legal powers of statementing legislation to place my son back in boarding school, simply to silence me. Paradoxically I wanted to be heard and yet remain anonymous. A paradox also played out by the participants in this study: all want their stories to be heard, but all have chosen to remain anonymous (Page 162).

My progress to Part B of the Doctorate in Education programme of the Open University presented me with a possible vehicle by which to tell the story. This programme provided a structured and academically recognised framework, in which I would have a supervisor to guide my work while in progress and, if satisfactorily completed a Doctorate in Education. I submitted a proposal, which was accepted by the Doctoral team.

Thus this study was born – a child of the culmination of aspects of my personal, my professional and my academic life.

The study is a longitudinal one, the main body of which covers a period of about two years in the lives of five children who live in Northern Ireland. Each child carries a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia (Chapter 2) and is in Year 6 (Primary 6, age 9 – 10 years) of compulsory education, when the parents join us on our journey. The parents travel with us until the children receive notification of the secondary school that has accepted them.

Chapters 1 to 5 of the narrative centre on the development of the study and initial information gathering from the parents. Chapter 1 provides a sketch of education in Northern Ireland relevant to the study. This is placed in political and historical context, a thread that runs throughout the narrative. The literature of dyspraxia, most of which originates in the realms of medicine and occupational therapy, is reviewed in Chapter 2. Woven

through the text of these background chapters are examples from the interview data. Chapter 3 takes us through the early stages of the study during which the research proposal was fine-tuned to a working design model. In Chapter 4 we meet with the parents and their children. From this point, inspired more by the feminist processes of ‘knowing/telling’ (Page 81) and ‘making the personal political’ (Page 85) than any social/scientific discipline or method, the route of our journey is led by their words. Chapter 5 is given over to the main interview phase of the transfer calendar, and the final chapter relates my findings to the research question.

My aim was, and remains, to reveal the life situation of this particular group of parents, at a particular phase in their life histories (Acker et al, 1983). However, I want and hope to tell more than just *“the plot of their lives”* (Richardson, 1993, p. 704), I also want and hope to share the feelings and emotions of the parents at this rite of passage; the transfer from primary to secondary schooling (Page 159). I emphasise here that the journey as directed by the parents did not follow the path that I anticipated, that is, one which would focus on the mechanics of the transfer. Rather the parents led me to the social unit of the family, which is embedded *“within other formal and informal social units and networks”* (Dunst et al, 1988, p. 5) including education.

Feminists have argued that the conventional approaches to sociological research are best suited to the goals of those in positions of management and control in society (Smith, 1977, 2nd edn). This suggests that such research is best matched with the interests of particular social institutions *“where the governing and organizing of society takes place”* (Acker et al. 1983, p. 424). In other words, traditional research was/is carried out by those who have an assumed power, upon those who do not.

Oliver (1992), writing about disability, intimates that the traditional research experiences are often oppressive and alienating to many of the research

subjects and, quoting Abberley (1991), Oliver (1995) describes these as attempts to:

“depoliticise the unavoidably political, to examine the complex and subtle through crude and simplistic measures”.

(p. 57)

As elaborated on page 82, such arguments encouraged me to seek an alternative research style to that of the structuralist disciplines, with their perceived reliance on *“methodological strategies to represent ‘reality’ more and more accurately”* (Fox, 1993, p. 162). My readings of Part III of Reader 2 of the Open University Course *E829: Equality and Diversity in Education* (Potts et al, 1995) veered me towards ‘emancipatory’ research which has its roots in feminism, Marxism and critical theory (Acker et al, 1983). Within the emancipatory paradigm, I readily identified with the feminist fundamental principles of *“reciprocity, gain and empowerment”* (Oliver, 1995, p. 58), the notion that the personal is political and the underlying commitment to change as well as to description (Morris, 1995). However, as I allude to in Chapter 3, emancipatory research (Pages 85-86), just like the traditional research approaches I sought to replace, fell short of perfection.

Morris (1995), writing from a disability-rights perspective, looks to emancipatory research to:

“enable [her] to understand [her] experience, and to reject the oppressive ideologies which are applied to [her] as a disabled woman”

(p. 215)

I look to this research to take the parents of children with developmental dyspraxia from invisibility to visibility and so validate their perspective - in a similar way that feminist research has validated a feminist consciousness and disability research (as defined by Oliver (1992)) has validated a disabled consciousness (Chapter 3). As I explain on page 84, I seek a

dialogue with parents in order to facilitate their empowerment (Barnes, 1992). Yet, as Acker et al (1983, p. 431) point out “*an emancipatory intent is no guarantee of an emancipatory outcome*”. I am acutely aware that in revealing the experiences of these parents, I create the possibility of the research findings being used against, rather than for the researched. Prevention of this is difficult to police. I can only hope that each who reads will respect the trust in which I set out the gift, given to me in trust by these five families. I am also conscious that “*people can only empower themselves*” (Oliver, 1995, p. 58) and that emancipatory research can at best only hope to facilitate this process.

The study belongs to the postmodernist culture (Page 77) and has been greatly influenced by my readings of writers, such as Hélène Cixous, Michel Foucault, Nicholas Fox, David Morris and Michael Oliver. Initially, I was attracted to postmodernism by what I perceived as its encouragement to enrich our knowledge by listening to more than one voice and its ‘talk’ of empowerment (Sparkes, 1995). I expected postmodernism to offer a contradictory discourse to that of my science grounding. Instead, I found not a discourse, but a philosophy that rejected modernist efforts to discover knowledge about the world, and replaced this with a focus upon the strategies by which such claims to knowledge are made (Fox, 1993).

As I relate in the final chapter, my readings of Fox (1993), also led me to identify with Deleuze and Guatarri’s notion of the ‘nomad’ moving through identities (Fox, 1993) and its inherent challenge to inflexible definitions of normality. Like Sparkes (1995), I challenge the modernist notion of universal values of ‘normality’ and the groupings of ‘silenced voices’ that this places on the margins of society – children, women, disabled, homosexual, lesbian, ‘special’. Yet, the ‘pilgrim’ of modernism still walks within the shifting sands that are my ‘Self’ and my ‘identity’ (Bauman, 1992). On the micro-level, for example, I still have room for the normalising parameters of pathological testing and the criteria that define illness and disease and, on the macro-level, I accept that, for the foreseeable

future, large complex societies will be structured around “*organizational routines and institutional projects*” (White, 1991, p.129). White (1991, p.113) suggests that postmodernist writers have generated “*imaginative, unorthodox ways to remember the unofficial, underprivileged concrete other*” and adds that, within this, there is a possibility for an ethical-political engagement with modernity. In this sense as Harvey (1990) argues:

“Knowledge does not reside in a cupboard or on a bookshelf, to be taken out, dusted down and looked at. Knowledge exists in our everyday lives. We live our knowledge and constantly transform it through what we do. . . . Knowing cannot be shelved, it becomes part of our life, and informs our actions which engages these structures”

(pp. 22 – 23)

Postmodernism not only allows for more than one explanation and understanding of a phenomenon, but also establishes the link with meaning that ties it to culture, history and individual lives.

“In the postmodern world, . . . the organic model can no longer hold sway as the sole or even dominant voice. Instead, postmodernism . . . calls into being subsystems of explanation, each with its own distinctive language or discourse, none of which holds absolute priority. It promises not so much a chaos or babel of competing tongues as the possibility that we may learn to enrich our knowledge . . . by listening to more than one voice.”

(Morris, 1991, p. 283)

VIGNETTE

In June 2000 I read David Morris's book, *The Culture of Pain*. My initial interest in this particular text was not related to the study, rather I hoped to gain an understanding of the muscle and joint pains that have been my constant companions since 1974. Unexpectedly, this book came to play an important part in the construction of my understanding of the concepts of postmodernism, the medical model and power relationships within our society.

Dr Morris describes the following story (Morris, 1991, pp.. 274 – 275) as one which opened his eyes to the meanings and social implications concealed in our everyday lives – so too for me.

In my retelling I have attempted to retain Dr Morris's tone.

A short, overweight, middle-aged woman of a timid nature attended Dr Morris's pain clinic on a regular basis. I shall call her Mary. Mary was employed as a drill-press operator in a factory, working the press for some eight hours a day. She attended Dr Morris's pain clinic because her elbow was so sore that she could no longer work. She had no immediate family and always came to appointments alone.

She was a 'model' patient, who underwent examination by the medical staff without question and without comment. Dr Morris considered and noted that her manner suggested complete faith in the expertise of his clinic and his staff. However, as the weeks passed Dr Morris became increasingly concerned about the lack of progress of his patient. The medical staff also drew to his attention Mary's deepening depression. He decided to talk to her about this after, but not during, her next consultation.

In a 'friendly' manner he asked her if the injury had made any major changes in her life. Almost immediately, Mary began to sob and sob and sob and Dr Morris realised that, as he had further appointments, his question had been a mistake. Once calmed, Mary talked for over an hour. She told him about her delight in playing the church organ and how she lived for the weekly practices and the Sunday performances. Now, she had nothing to look forward to because the immobility of her elbow meant that she could not play the keyboard.

When Dr Morris asked why she had never told the staff any of this, she replied that they had not asked.

On reflection, Dr Morris realised that Mary's medical notes read, not like the story of a whole person, but rather like the story of a body part, that is, an elbow.

I came to this study with the insider knowledge of a parent, and the intention of giving verbal support to a group that I considered was silenced by those in positions of power (Sparkes, 1995). I acknowledge my political undercurrents and that I want you to see what I have come to believe (Stake, 1995). However, I would not want you to think that I set out to prove what I believed and that I have represented the words of the parents to this end. From early on, I was acutely aware of this possibility, especially because of my integral involvement in the connecting of the processes of data analysis and data collection. In an attempt to eliminate this I aimed for technical rigour, by consciously and deliberately linking the social process of engagement in the field with the technical processes of data collection and the decisions that this linking involves. Ball (1993) calls this linking *reflexivity*. Throughout this process I have endeavoured to maintain a position of "*self-doubt and distrust, that is, distrust of the data*" (Ball, 1993, p. 40). By this I do not mean that I did not believe what the parents told me. Rather it is a recognition of my acceptance that "*'facts' are interpretations*

'after the fact'” (Richardson, 1993, p. 704) and are constructed from what I have accumulated in my existing conscious and subconscious memories (Eisner, 1993, p.54). As I discuss on page 102 conscious memory is made and remade as we make sense of our experiences, and thus reflexive knowledge (knowledge of the ‘Self’ and the ‘identity’) is always just a concept away. Like Nias, I found these to be *‘slippery concepts’* (Nias, 1991, p.155), and yet, it is by these slippery concepts that I aim to account for myself within the research and achieve validity.

The validity of this research lies in the rightness of method as a relation between practices and purpose (Gitlin et al, 1993). It is a form of internal validity that is regulated and tested by reflexivity. I recognise that this form of transgressive research runs the risk of dismissal by those who measure validity as *“a commodity that can be purchased with techniques”* (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985, p.13). However this study does *“not hide behind a curtain of objectivity”* (Gitlin et al, 1993, p. 205) as in positivist research, rather validity is shifted from the procedural to the political and the ethical, by self-acknowledgement and critical assessment of my prejudgments (Page 93). As I discuss on page 89 extension to the wider community is by the process of naturalistic generalisation (Stake & Turnbull, 1982). Stake (1995, p. 85) describes this as a sharing of experience *“so well constructed that the [reader] feels as if it happened to themselves”*. This is akin to the knowing/telling of the feminist paradigm (Page 81). Like Walker (1981) I am not clear how this works, but I believe that it is a similar process to that which allows us to read a novel about a faraway place and to relate to the familiar aspects within the telling.

I emphasise that this document is only an interpretative account, grounded in the language of the parents. I have tried throughout the study to minimise misinterpretation of those whose reality I seek to portray, with techniques such as respondent validation (Stake, 1995). As I describe on page 92 this was built into the research design as part of the reciprocity demanded by emancipatory research; a means to facilitate dialogue, so that the parents

could have a part in the interpretation of their reality (Gitlin et al, 1993). But, I have always understood and accepted that the best I can offer is my interpretation.

Maxwell (1992) writes that:

"As observers and interpreters of the world, we are inextricably part of it; we cannot step outside our own experience to obtain some observer-independent account of what we experience."

(p. 283)

I can adhere to this, as often, whilst listening to the parents, I was aware of my past rising up to meet the words of their present. Within this, as I discuss later, there was always the danger of my past overtaking their present - a danger that I tempered with reflexivity (Page 93). Yet, without a past, I would not have had a framework on which to fashion and write this study. Cixous (1994, p. xxi) describes us as *"the learned or ignorant caretakers of several memories"*. These memories, of what I have read, seen, heard, touched or felt – my past, are embedded in language and as I write and retell this story *"the whole is poured back, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, into the river I sail"* (Cixous, 1994, p. xxi). With a different past, I would be another 'Self'; another researcher, with a virgin interpretation of the same data. Maxwell (1992, p. 283) points out that *"it is always possible for there to be different, equally valid accounts from different perspectives"* and I consider that alternative accounts and similar studies would add to and strengthen this attempt to portray reality, rather than diminish it. Thus my views are both relativistic and pluralistic. Relativistic because I consider that *"knowledge is always constructed relative to a framework, to a form of representation, to a cultural code, and to a personal biography"* (Eisner, 1993, p. 54). Pluralistic because I consider that there is *"no single legitimate way to make sense of the world"* (Eisner, 1993. p. 54).

The study is written in the attitude of experiential case study (Von Wright, 1971) and aims to provide an understanding of the experiences of these five sets of parents during the period surrounding the transfer. It is a journey of discovery rather than a testing of theory, in the style of what Stake (1995) terms 'intrinsic' case study. Data analysis was sequential and was both guided by and guided the data, in the vein of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Rather than testing a prior theory, this approach to data analysis allows for discovery, whilst also providing a comprehensive way to explore and test evidence (Nias, 1993). Additionally it acts as a means to fix the territorial boundaries of the case in terms of depth as opposed to width (Brownlee & Carrington, 2000). The timing of data gathering was influenced by the flow of the transfer calendar within the school year (Page 49), and the stages and phases of this process facilitated well my need to collect data and then withdraw for reflection. In the field, as I hope I reveal in the narrative, timing and data gathering did not run as smoothly as this implies. Nor did I gather an equal volume of data from each set of parents or each parent within a set.

From the outset, I expected to encounter at least some shared experiences with the parents, but what I did not expect was the effect that the participant-researcher role would have on my understanding of past experiences. Sears (1992) points out that:

"As we peer into the eyes of the other, we embark on a journey of the Self: exploring our fears, celebrating our voices, challenging our assumptions, reconstructing our pasts."

(p. 155)

This mutually constructed story called for much self-reflection on my part (Sparkes, 1994) and, from this 'in-my-head' re-evaluating of my past, I consider that I have gained an element of "*stability and comfort*" (Corbett, 1996, p.99). By this I do not mean that I have reached a state of self-

satisfaction. Rather, I have created a comfortable operating distance between past and present (Page 102). Gorelick (1991) suggests that participants also indulge in reconstructing their past, and evidence of this does arise in the data from the parents. For instance, on page 91 I record how Valerie continually wanted to revise, in view of her ongoing reflections, what she had told me in previous interviews. Acker et al (1983) points out that this cycle of 'thinking and talking, talking and thinking' raises concerns of how reality is constructed and reconstructed in the course of a research study. This raised particular concerns with regard to validity, as both the researcher and the researched were in an ongoing process of reformulating perspectives. I decided that data as collected provided a greater accuracy of the instance, and that change of interpretation belonged to its own instance, as to do otherwise would be a violation of the present with the hindsight of the future.

Awareness of patterns, differences and links within the data did not simply 'emerge', rather it was an on-going process of my conceptualisations (Woods, 1985) – developing, fluctuating and becoming, but without beginning or end. Sometimes I sifted through the data and came up with little or nothing. Then, when I was perhaps watching television or driving the car, a concept took shape; akin to what Ford (1975) describes as 'a leap of the imagination'. However, it was the discovery of the relevance of Foucault's analyses of medicine, madness, discipline and punishment, and ethics to the experience of children with special educational needs, which enabled me to do (Allan, 1996, Allan, 2000). In Foucault's 'box of tools' I found the methodologies of archaeology and genealogy. Within these the main strategy used by Foucault is one of reversal, a strategy he used with great effect to show, for example, that *"sexuality is not repressed and silenced, but is part of a whole proliferation of discourses"* (Allan, 1996, p. 225). This allowed for an understanding that as a parent, professionals did not silence me. Rather I was acting out an identity of the Self that had developed through the process of social experience and activity (Mead, 1997) (Page 165).

In a self-characterisation Foucault (1982, p. 208, quoted in Rabinow, 1984) said:

“the goal of my work during the last twenty years has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate on the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.”

(p. 7)

I admit that I initially found the Foucauldian perspective of power hard to grasp. However, over time I developed my conception of power from one of dominance alone (a visible power), to one which also allows for an invisible power: *“a structure, a relation of forces . . . that . . . far from being simply prohibitive is a force that generates its own transgression”* (Shepherdson, 2001, p. 12), that is, a disciplinary power. Disciplinary power does not follow the Newtownian system in which every action produces an equal and opposite reaction, rather power is like a *“Moebius strip, the two sides of which constantly disappear as one circles round its finite surface”* (Shepherdson, 2001, p. 16) (Page 165).

In this study I pick up on a central theme of Foucault’s work – the way in which the ‘gaze’ through ‘techniques of surveillance’ (hierarchical observation, normalising judgements and the examination) constructs individuals as both subjects and objects of knowledge and power (Allan, 1996) (Page 168). Such surveillance does not stop at the individual, but rather creates a reciprocal power relationship which:

“‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in entirety with effects of power that derive from one another. . .”

(Foucault, 1977, pp. 176 – 177)

It is the 'gaze' which makes visible a person or population – the different, the alien, the child with special educational needs. It is the 'gaze' that allows for the institutionalised disciplinary power of education – the record and the examination, and it is through the power of the 'gaze', and at the expense of those subjected to it that expertise is achieved (Fox, 1993).

The study was never envisaged as one of closure, rather my aim is for a continuation of process. Thus, in the final chapter, I turn to Foucault's late phase of ethics in which "*he gave individuals considerable scope to resist the power exercised upon them*" (Allan, 2000, p. 44); a means to move from "*invisibility to pride*" (Corbett, 1996, p. 98). Here I found Foucault limiting as although he moved beyond "*structuralism and hermeneutics*" (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 2), he remained a structuralist thinker (Allan, 2000). As I intimated on page 15 help came from the writings of the philosopher Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Guattari. Unlike Foucault who focused on power, their regime of power is "*the restricted re-territorialized form of desire in capitalism . . . with its disciplines of school, clinic, workplace, family*" (Fox, 1993, p. 84). Thus unlike Foucault, they are able to recommend a de-territorialisation, "*out of which is produced a nomadic subject, a point of intensity which enables becoming, or to put it otherwise, enables resistance, enables the realization that things could be different*" (Fox, 1993, p. 78). In other words, theirs is a political undertaking; concerned with empowerment and disempowerment.

I have written a lot of myself into this introduction, something which may appear at variance to my earlier reasoning for making my personal invisible. However, that was 'then' and this is 'now' and, in the interval, my thinking and understanding have evolved and my interpretation of the external world has changed. I no longer fear exposure as a parent when I speak with and lecture to professionals. I now speak openly about my experiences as the parent of a child with dyspraxia. This willingness to appear visible and my 'coming out' as a parent, have been partly influenced by my release from the fear of the gaze of the officers of compulsory education (Page 169) now

that Graeme is over sixteen. However I cannot overlook the part played by my engagement in this study. Writing in 1930, Vygotsky, albeit in the different context of elaborating on Engel's concept of human labour and tool use, proffered that there is no tool whose use does not shape the person using it, just as it shapes the external environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The research process presented here was a 'tool'; one primarily designed to culminate in a doctoral thesis, but one that has also resulted in a transformation of my thinking and understanding of the external world.

I consider this phenomenon of change an important facet of this study. It is inseparable, not only from me as the researcher, but also from the researched and the data produced. Stake (1995) describes *La Condition Humaine*, one of the best-known paintings of the artist René Magritte. This picture, which hangs in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, shows an easel in front of a window, with its painting an exact extension of the landscape outside. The artist's explanation of this work was that the painting represented the very landscape that it hid.

"It existed for the spectator, as it were, simultaneously in his mind, as both inside the room in the painting, and outside in the real landscape. Which is how we see the world: we see it as outside ourselves even though it is only a mental representation of it that we experience inside ourselves."

Magritte (1938) quoted in Whitfield (1992, p. 90)

Magritte's painting is fixed in time. If time in the painting were to move on, the landscape would change, and so too, in order to meet the artist's concept, would the painting on the easel. Similarly, the mental representation that was my reality has changed with the advancement of my personal history and knowledge - knowledge that I have constructed from my individual and ongoing relationships with the world (Eisner, 1993).

Mills (1959) writes that we must learn to use our personal experiences in our intellectual work and to continually examine and interpret our thoughts in systematic reflection. Throughout the study I kept a research diary (Page 98). This contains not just appointments and study notes, but also fringe thoughts and personal anecdotes of my every-day life. It is a chronicle of my experiences and a record, albeit imperfect, of the changes in my interpretative processes, personal feelings and attitudes during this research. As we travel on our journey, I refer to entries in this diary and share some of my personal narrative. I hope that from this you will gain some understanding of the reasonings and motives behind my decisions.

I also hope that from these personal insights you will gain a sense of the relationships that developed between the parents (the researched) and me (the researcher) as I consider that, without the deepening of relationships, the *“mutual sifting process . . . that allowed major issues to emerge”* (Spencer, 1997, p.6) would have been lessened.

Sparkes (1994) eloquently captures the importance of the relationship between the researched and the researcher when he writes:

“The form of relationship between researcher and storyteller powerfully shapes the ways in which the story of any life gets told”

(p. 169)

I like to think that at the autobiographical level the parents and I were equals (Hastrup, 1992). Yet, I was, and remain, acutely aware of the imbalance in the partnership at the research level and the resulting *“usually unarticulated tension between friendships and the goal of the research”* (Acker et al, 1983, p. 428). My role as researcher was to gather information and I was ever anxious, lest I should exploit developing friendships to that end by confusing personal stories, related in the trust of friendship, with research data. These considerations intensified as the research progressed and

relationships deepened and became more relaxed. At the start of the study I had instigated all appointments and interviews, but as the distance between us shortened, parents began to contact me to discuss issues that had emerged in their lives. When this first happened I was secretly pleased as I considered that it demonstrated the dialogical relationship that I sought. This shift in relationships led me to renegotiate the terms of my access to the data, but I failed to consider access to me as researcher. This shortfall was highlighted when a parent began to phone my home frequently ‘just for a chat’ or to discuss a ‘family crisis’ not related to the study. This crossing of what I perceived as the ‘research’ line caused a temporary dilemma. I felt responsible for having invaded her life with my research, and guilty that I had taken for granted the parents’ understanding of the researcher role. I realised that I should have set clearer guidelines as to when parents could access my home. Fortunately, the matter was resolved amicably, and she and her husband remained in the study. However, I was pulled up sharply to the reality of the onerous responsibility on the researcher to ensure, as far as practicable, that no one is placed in a position of potential embarrassment or offence.

The boundaries of the case were established by the words that the parents shared with me during the research journey, albeit delimited by the literature that informed the research (Brownlee & Carrington, 2000), and the time frame of the Transfer Procedure (Page 49). I did not set out with the engineering plans of a canal builder, rather I wanted the river of my research to follow whatever was of importance to the parents at that time. In phenomenological tradition I hoped that this would allow for the different interpretations of reality that result from human consciousness (McHoul & Grace, 1993). In saying this I am aware that Foucault (1970) rejected phenomenology outright:

“if there is one approach that I do reject . . . it is that (one might call it broadly speaking, the phenomenological

approach) which gives absolutely priority to the observing subject."

(p. xiv)

However in my utilisation of the Foucauldian perspective, with its focus on formal and informal discourses, I seek to address the:

"difference between the image and the word, a gap or void that, according to Foucault, is not sufficiently confronted by phenomenology."

(Shepherdson, 2001, p. 9)

Shepherdson (2001, p. 9) quotes Foucault (1963) as writing (in an essay on Robbe-Grillet) that *"the simple experience of picking up a pen creates . . . a distance"*. Yet it is writing that bridges the gap between the thoughts that signify the reality that I wish to represent and the thoughts of the reader that signify his/her interpretation of that representation. MaClure (2000) considers that it is this space that allows us to think truth, falsehood, sincerity etc. and writes that:

"Without the spacing that language imposes it would be impossible to grasp an 'outer' reality of material objects and observable actions, insulated from people's 'inner' subjective world of feelings, imaginings and delusions."

(p. 3)

In Star Trek Mr Spock can perform mind transfer because he is half Vulcan. His creator has given him unmediated access to reality and the self-knowledge of the other. I can only fantasise about such powers and have to rely on language/writing to convey my description of the research process. I accept that I have no guarantee that the meaning and understanding that I wish to convey will remain unaltered in the spacing and distance that writing imposes.

As storyteller, I am mindful of the power and privilege implied in the action of writing (Sparkes, 1995, p.166). Yet, like Richardson (1990), I cannot see any way to write and share this story without deploying a degree of this power and privilege as identified by postmodernism. My compromise is to admit and to attempt to make clear through documentation of my reflexivity that my knowledge is "*partial, embodied, and historically and culturally situated*" (Sparkes, 1995, p. 166) to the extent that I am an 'insider' (Page 95).

I emphasise here that language is always incomplete and that descriptions of 'reality' are always far from exhaustive (Sparkes, 1995). I aim for transparency, yet, "*there is nothing innocent about making the invisible visible*" (Strathern, 2000, p. 309). Indeed, by taking on the role of writer, I unavoidably take on the role of 'editor' and unwittingly become 'censor' to the prejudices of the cultural value system of which I am part. No one is free from the surrounding cultural influences (Corbett, 1998), and decisions made with seemingly professional objectivity may be laden with the prejudices of deeply held cultural beliefs. Corbett (1998) illustrates this by drawing on history and the case of Dr Langdon Down, who was superintendent at Normansfield Hospital, Middlesex from 1858 until 1868, and is renowned for his classification of Down's Syndrome. Corbett (1998) reports how the special educator, Wolf Wolfensberger, suggests that Langdon was unwittingly a victim of the culture of his time. This was the culture that produced Darwinism and Eugenics, and one which was also influenced by the travelling fairs in which children and adults with obvious impairments were displayed for the amusement of the able but ignorant (Oliver & Barnes, 1998). The aristocrats of this time also frequently kept 'idiots' for their amusement (Ryan & Thomas, 1987, revised edn). The Vökerschau exhibited people who were determined 'strange' because of their exotic form or manner, and Langdon Down observed that in certain cases one race could take on the features of another. From this knowledge, gained from the popular culture of his time and not scientific judgement,

Langdon Down coined the term 'mongolism'. Corbett (1998) cites Wolfensberger as indicating that Langdon Down's: *"so-called scientific judgements were based on deeply ingrained and familiar patterns of prejudice"* (Corbett, 1998, p. 36). Whilst we in special education in the 21st Century might recoil at the very idea of viewing 'freaks' in a travelling show and distance ourselves from the prejudices of the 19th Century, we retain our own prejudices. Oliver & Barnes (1998) points out that our perceptions are:

"culturally produced through the complex interaction between the mode of production and the central values of the society concerned."

(p. 27)

Thus we are often unaware of our prejudices because they are familiar patterns of prejudice within our culture. This was illustrated in the report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence in April, 1993 (MacPherson, 1999), which identified institutional racism within the Metropolitan Police Force. Institutional racism is not a product of individual minds; it is a culturally and socially created force, which seduces individuals to unwittingly join its ranks. Unwittingly I shall have written some of the cultural prejudices of today into the fabric of this study. Thus now or in the future a reader may well recoil at my political incorrectness; just as I today recoil at the freak shows of the 19th Century or the institutional racism of the Metropolitan Police of the late 20th Century.

This does not mean that I am complacent about the inclusion of prejudice within the report. Rather, I acknowledge the presence of embedded prejudices in the consciousness that I bring to the study and through reflexivity aim to lay them bare to scrutiny (Gitlin et al, 1993).

As I intimated on page 13, the words of the parents veered the study away from the neat little 'education' track that I had envisaged it would follow,

and on to a 'family' track. I worried that this might devalue the study from a professional perspective and leave me open to accusations of parental/researcher indulgence. My concern was deepened by Yin's warning about the dangers of unwittingly shifting "*the theoretical concerns or objectives*" of the case, leading to a situation in which "*the investigator can correctly be accused of exercising a bias in conducting the research and interpreting the findings*" (Yin, 1994, p. 52). Help came from my readings of Foucault, through which I came to recognise that this conflict of interests highlighted a 'gap' (Page 164) between my thinking as a parent and my thinking as a professional; a 'gap' that is reflected in the parent-partnership literature by Wolfendale (1997), when she writes:

" . . . too many parents remain unreached and seemingly, unreachable: the power balance is unevenly weighted towards professionals (teachers, educational psychologists, social workers, health workers etc.) who too often retreat behind their "barricades of mystiques" (Midwinter, 1977)."

(pp. 1 – 2)

In the mushrooming of parent/professional partnership in the last two decades (Armstrong, 1995), and its shifting from "*the radical margins of experimental education to the expected norms of mainstream practice*" (Maclachlan, 1996, p. 28) much emphasis has been on extending parental involvement and justifying its worth. However, little space has been given to a fundamental critical analysis of the practices that have been put in place. My intent is not to denigrate the work of those who have brought parent/professional partnership to where it is today, but to encourage not just the listening to, but also the hearing of those who have been hitherto mainly unheard by policy makers.

Wolfendale (1997) advocates that a parent-professional relationship is unproductive unless it leads to empowerment of the parents. Further, Dunst

et al (1988) advocate that for such empowerment to be realised each professional must *'rethink' the way in which he or she views families, as well as the way that he or she engages in . . . relationships* (p. 4). This study does not examine parent/professional partnership per se. However it does present an opportunity for those professionals who read it, to consider the 'gap' that might exist between their perspective of what is important in the lives of parents, and that viewed important to the parents themselves. In Foucauldian terms such a 'gap' provides an opportunity to facilitate change (Allan, 1996, p.225), and change begins with a 'rethinking' of the current values on which theory and practice are founded.

Modernism pretended that it could go beyond politics:

"If only it could be rational, objective, scientific enough, it could be value neutral, could tell us who we were and what we were really like."

(Fox, 1993, p. 123)

Postmodernism *"must be open about its own politics"* as *"that is what makes it postmodern"* (Fox, 1993, p.123). By making the personal political (Page 85) and challenging the political undercurrents of the dominance/dependency modernist model (Page 83) this study offers a stimulus for critical analysis of existing professional theory, policy and practice. The search for 'truths' as opposed to a 'single truth' (Page 82) allows for diversity of thought and practice, and I believe that it is through the recognition and acceptance of such diversity that changes in policy can be effected. Difference challenges the barriers, such as the limits of our own private orbit (Page 7) and our established beliefs, which hold us back from understanding and evaluating what is really going on in education and special education. It disturbs:

“our comfort with [familiar and] unexamined ways of thinking that support our own needs and fantasies and our place within culture and society.”

(The Open University, 1992d, p. 13)

It reveals ‘gaps’ in our thinking and ‘gaps’ that exist between ‘purist’ theoretical thinking and the diverse reality of practice (Corbett, 2000). At a political level ‘gaps’ raise questions with those who are responsible for creating and administering policy, whilst at a professional level they present challenges to teachers and other professionals in education (Ainscow, 1993).

Clough (2000) cites that in the process of generating inclusive educational practices, policy must be in tune with what actually happens in schools. In such a model, theory and practice are inextricably interwoven and *“it is the rapport between theorists and practitioners which forms the creative growth of lived theory”* (Corbett, 2000, p, 167). The thoughts generated by this study through naturalistic generalisation will not grow unless they are nourished by practitioners and enriched by the thoughts of other writers. Whilst publication affords the opportunity to open the study to a wider audience, I consider that the domain of educational professionals in training (e.g. INSET) and personal development (e.g. Advanced Diploma and MA) offers a fertile space for creative growth. Here, by encouraging professionals to examine particular events and/or processes as a whole and in their natural settings, the study could potentially reach and challenge a diverse and wide-reaching professional base (Clough, 2000) and hence make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education.

The Participants

Central to this study is five children who each carry a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia (Chapter 2) The following is a brief introduction to each of the participating families. Additional information is provided within the text.

Patricia and Kieran – parents of Tiernan

I first met Patricia on 6 August 1998 in her home in a small housing estate in a quiet fishing village on the Antrim Coast. She was just home from working a night shift as an auxiliary nurse in a local nursing home, and was looking after her two-year old nephew until lunchtime:

“I work nights for the money . . . means my sister can work too, as me and my Ma can watch Liam. My Ma’s taken Tiernan to school and she’ll bring back the dinner. Then I’ll get a wee sleep.”

Kieran was at work driving a delivery van for a local supermarket. He had been working there for about six months, but Patricia was concerned that he would give it up:

“Kieran’s working now, but he gets fed up. He mightn’t stick it. I don’t blame him ‘cos he’s a fitter-welder by trade. Driving a van’s not skilled nor nothin’ . . . Tiernan needs to get educated to get a job. Then his wife won’t have to work.”

Tiernan is an only child, but has eight cousins, aged 6 months to 16 years, who live in the same housing estate. The extended family is a closely-knit one and there is a lot of intra-family support. Tiernan likes ‘looking after’ his younger cousins:

“Tiernan’s a great help. On Saturdays he looks after his wee cousins. At his age you’d think he’d rather play football, but not Tiernan. . . He just loves them and they love him to bits.”

(Patricia, August 1998)

Patricia’s mother accompanies Tiernan on the ten minute walk to school. As the study begins Tiernan is in the process of formal assessment. His statement was issued in June 2000.

Valerie and Roy – parents of Nathan

My first interview with Valerie was on 24 September 1998, but I had spoken with her by telephone on several occasions about two years previously. Then, Nathan was being bullied at school and she had contacted me in my capacity as educational advisor to the Dyspraxia Foundation (NI).

Valerie, Roy and their three boys live in a bungalow at the end of a pot-holed lane that runs from a narrow twisting country road in Mid-Ulster. Their nearest neighbours are Valerie’s parents who live in a farmhouse about a mile and a half away. Valerie is a part-time nurse, and Roy works as an electrical engineer in Belfast.

Nathan and his two younger brothers attend a small rural primary school, which is about four miles from their home. The boys travel to and from school by car. Valerie’s mother cares for the boys when Valerie is at work:

“I try to get my hours when they are at school. Roy’s away from seven and he’s not home until after seven at night. Mummy and Nathan don’t really get on. It’s always a row when I pick him up. Always my fault that I’ve let him get the way he is. But I couldn’t afford to give up and

*I couldn't afford to pay someone for all that Mummy does.
She loves Nathan really . . . but she doesn't understand . . .
. but then who does? I know I don't."*

(Valerie, September 1998)

Joan and William – parents of Laura

William, a Presbyterian Minister, was the only father to make initial contact. Joan was a primary school teacher but gave up to become a “*full time mother and minister's wife*” when Laura was born:

“I'm kept busy with church affairs. William really needed me in his last church. He had to make a lot of prison visits and support families who had lost loved ones. Now, I'm only glad that I'm here for Laura.”

(Joan, September 1998)

Laura has a brother, Iain, who is three years younger. Both children attend the local primary school. It is about three-quarters of a mile from the Manse, which is a large detached house situated in its own wooded grounds on the outskirts of a large seaside town. Laura is statemented.

“Joan and I manage the children between us. We share the responsibilities. I take them to school on the days that I take assembly, and she does the other days. Laura needs a lot of time and it's good that Joan is in the Sunday School and takes the Brownies.”

(William, September 1998)

Margarite and Peter – parents of Nicholas

I have known Margarite and Peter through the Dyspraxia Foundation since September 1996. Margarite phoned in early August 1998 and expressed surprise at my not having thought of Nicholas immediately. I explained that I had not wanted to make anyone feel pressurised into taking part in the study because of any friendship that might already exist, and so I had circulated letters to the total membership.

Margarite works from home providing secretarial support for Peter who is a property developer. Nicholas is an only child. He is statemented and travels to and from school by taxi:

“His [Nicholas’s] father can’t stand stupidity. He threatens to put the foot down. He says to Nicholas, “Are you the full shilling.” He thinks I’m soft with him. Thinks I should be like his mother. He’s nearly forty, but he’s still afraid of her. She’s embarrassed that Nicholas won’t be going to the grammar, but his father was paid for . . . he didn’t get the eleven plus. I did though and he hates that.”

(Margarite, September 1998)

Lorna and Sidney – parents of Aaron

I first met Lorna and Sidney in November 1998 in their terraced home in a small market town in North-West Ulster. Lorna is a bank clerk and Sidney teaches in the local grammar school. Lorna’s widowed mother, a retired teacher, lives with them and looks after Aaron when Lorna and Sidney are working.

“I don’t know what I’d do without Mum. Aaron was a restless baby. I couldn’t manage him . . . Mum just has the

touch. She doesn't get irritated like I do. My older brother is just like Aaron . . . It was relief when she moved in because I just wasn't coping . . . but I still love him, I really do."

(Lorna, November 1998)

Aaron is an only child. He attends the local primary school which is within walking distance of his home.

CHAPTER ONE

Education in Northern Ireland

Like elsewhere in the UK education in Northern Ireland is complex and the background information given in this chapter is selective and aimed at helping the reader make sense of the participants' experiences. Readers who are unfamiliar with the education system in Northern Ireland, should note that although education in Northern Ireland very much follows that of England and Wales, it does not mirror it and is subject to its own statutory framework and timetable for implementation (Appendix 1.1).

The main interviewing phase of the study is bounded by the Transfer Procedure Calendar, which is set out in Figure 1.1.

From early in the 19th Century education in Ireland has been closely linked to political and constitutional issues (Abbott et al, 1999). Since the partition of Ireland and the inception of Northern Ireland in 1921, the emphasis has been on the political dimension, with historical studies (Farren, 1995, Whyte, 1990) describing a divided education system in which Catholic and Protestant children are educated separately.

This societal division of Catholic and Protestant was evident in the study, with the children all attending primary schools in accordance with the religious preference of the family. This information was volunteered by each of the parents at the initial meeting, and prepared the way for a 'confirmation' that I was from the Protestant tradition. I use the word 'confirmation' purposefully as each had 'guessed' at my religion from my name and where I lived. As far as I am aware this had no effect on the data

gathered, rather it was part of the weighing up process in the early stages of trust building specific to the culture of Northern Ireland. Patricia exemplified this at our first meeting in August 1998:

“Tiernan goes to the chapel school. We all went there. Me, Kieran . . . he was two classes above me. Didn’t think then that I’d marry him [laughs]. All his cousins go there. I hated it . . . They’re strict . . . but boys need the Church to keep them in hand. You’re a Prod?”

I nodded in agreement.

“Me and Kieran thought so . . . not that it matters, but its good to know. You know by the name . . . There’s some baddins about. Can’t be too careful.”

She acknowledged her acceptance of our ‘difference’ by offering support:

“If you don’t know about our schools. I’m the woman to keep you right. Don’t be shy about askin’.”

Apart from religious considerations the choice of primary school by participants had been influenced by factors such as a parent having attended the school or the distance from home to school:

“We sent Nicholas to his Daddy’s school. It’s close . . . about a mile away”

(Margarite, August 1998)

"The boys go to the same wee school that I went to. It's handy for Mummy when she's picking them up."

(Valerie, September 1998)

This fits with the findings of West's (1994) review of published research into the factors taken into account by parents when choosing a primary school, which reports that there is a general consensus that the school's location is of prime importance.

For Laura the primary school attended was guided by where William was 'called' by the Church:

"William's on the Board of Governors. He's the Presbyterian Minister for the school. She's been there three years now. Since William was called from Belfast."

(Joan, September 1998)

As elsewhere in the United Kingdom, statute guarantees that every school is open to all pupils regardless of religious denomination (DENI, 1994). However most Catholic pupils go to Catholic Schools, maintained by the Council for Maintained Schools, and most Protestants children go to Controlled Schools, provided by the Education and Library Boards and managed by Boards of Governors (Bunting & McConnell, 1995) (Appendix 1.2). There are also a small number of Integrated Schools, which educate pupils from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds together (Abbott et al, 1999). Special schools have always educated Catholic and Protestant children together, so in 'Northern Ireland' terms, special schools could be seen as providing a better integrated community than most mainstream schools. None of the children in this study have ever had a special school placement. However, Nicholas spent two years in a speech and language unit before returning to mainstream in Year 5:

"He started with the speech therapist when he was about thirty months . . . poor wee love. The doctor thought he might be autistic. . . He started ordinary school, but once he got his statement he went to the speech unit . . . It was nice there and he was well settled, but as soon as he could talk he was out."

(Margarite, August1998)

Primary schools cater for children from Year 1 to Year 7 (ages 4 to 11 years) and post-primary schools for pupils from Year 8 to Year 12 or Year 14. Secondary education is organised largely along selective lines, with grammar schools selecting pupils on the basis of academic ability, that is Transfer Test results (commonly known as the 11+). If oversubscribed, secondary schools use published criteria to select pupils. Traditional criteria include whether or not a child has brothers or sisters at the school, having a parent who works in the school and the distance from home to school. However some of the more unusual criteria listed by schools across the province are an ability in music, where a pupil's surname appears in a random list of letters of the alphabet and a pupil's disciplinary and/or attendance record. Non-grammar schools are not permitted to include academic factors in their admission criteria (DENI, 1994). The majority of pupils are affected by the 11+ system, but in the Craigavon area an alternative system, known as the 'Dickson Plan' operates. In this system all children transfer from primary to junior high school at age 11 years, and academic selection is delayed to 14 years (Alexander et al, 1998). (Appendix 1.3 provides background information on school categories and compulsory school ages).

Background to transfer at 11+

Before the Second World War, children in Northern Ireland were legally required to receive an 'elementary' education between the ages of six and fourteen. There were a small number of grammar school places that provided access to university and the professions. These were mainly fee-paying, but there were a few highly competitive scholarships available (Gallagher & Smith, 2000).

After the War, free and compulsory secondary education was introduced through the 1947 Education Act for Northern Ireland (1944 Education Act for England and Wales). The resulting institutional arrangements were that pupils would attend primary schools up to age 11 years. Then, a selective procedure would identify those children suited to a grammar school or technical college curriculum. The remainder and largest number would attend secondary modern schools. The thinking behind this was that aptitude and ability could distinguish children, and that it was proper to provide them with different education and experiences. In Northern Ireland, grammar and secondary schools were divided into parallel systems, which echoed the religious divisions in society. The technical school dimension failed to develop, and by the late 1950s and early 1960s a bipartite system of grammar and secondary schools was established in the Province.

At this time, the purpose of the grammar schools was to provide pupils with an academic curriculum and a route to higher education. Secondary school pupils were not encouraged to take external examinations and were not expected to remain at school after the compulsory leaving age. Evidence of this can be found in examination statistics which reveal that as late as 1970/71 in Northern Ireland, more than 85% of secondary school leavers had less than the equivalent of one 'O' level (Gallagher, 2000). The aim of secondary schools, in this the post-war economic boom, was to provide pupils with the skills needed to make employment (such as entry to an apprenticeship or secretarial work) or domestic choices. The prevailing model of family life was one in which the husband was expected to be

breadwinner, and the social and economic unequal status between men and women was reinforced by marriage and parenthood (Walker, 1995).

The first of Harold Wilson's Labour governments initiated a shift towards comprehensive education in England and Wales in the 1960s. A number of other European countries also followed this trend, stating that it was in the interests of equality and fairness (Gallagher, 2000). However, the devolved parliament in Northern Ireland decided against this route and the bipartite system remained. Between 1976 and 1979 the Labour government began to move the system away from selection, but this was halted when the Conservative government came to power in 1979.

In the following years, there was no change in the transfer procedure but there was major change in the system with the introduction of the 1989 Education Reform Order. This brought elements of the competitive market to schooling with measures which included a statutory curriculum, greater parental choice through open enrolment and new arrangements for the financing of schools under the Local Management of Schools (DENI, 1994).

A Labour government was re-elected in 1997 and the question of selection was reintroduced onto the political agenda. Tony Worthington, the then Northern Ireland Minister for Education, called for an impartial and detailed study to be carried out as an informed basis for future discussion on possible changes to the system.

The New Northern Ireland Assembly was established as part of the Belfast Agreement on 10 April 1998 and met for the first time on 25 June 1998. Following a period of adjournment Martin McGuinness was nominated Minister of Education on 29 November 1999. Writing in the Belfast Telegraph on 30 November 1999 Phillip Johnson noted that one of the Minister's First tasks was "*to take a controversial decision on whether to scrap the 11-plus examination*" (Johnson, 1999, p.1). On 12 January 2000 Kathryn Torney in the Belfast Telegraph (p.7), quoted the minister as saying

that he would take no decision on the issue until the completion of the review ordered by Tony Worthington. The completed study, the Gallagher Report, (Gallagher & Smith, 2000) was published in September 2000. At the time of writing, the Minister has made no decision on the future of the eleven plus.

Background to special educational provision

Much of the early special education provision in Northern Ireland arose just after the Second World War in the form of charitable institutions. The emphasis was on care and the services provided were of a paramedical and an educo/therapeutic nature. The philosophy behind special schools was similar to that of the selection system, that is, that children could be distinguished by aptitude and ability.

The 1947 Education Act (NI) defined categories of handicap and laid responsibility on Education Committees for the provision of services to meet these needs. Children 'unsuitable for education at school' were referred to the County Education and Health committees. Most of these were placed in special care schools, established by the Northern Ireland Health Authority.

At this time, there were already schools in Northern Ireland for 'the deaf', 'the blind' and 'the physically handicapped'. The Education Committees focused on the development of provision for 'educationally subnormal' (ESN) children – a group first identified in England and Wales in the 1944 Education Act. In the 1950s special care schools, day and residential, were established in major towns throughout the Province. Children with lesser learning difficulties and physical handicaps remained in ordinary schools. Mainly because of the remoteness from major towns, rural schools in particular catered for children from a wide range of abilities. Remedial classes were established in schools from 1947 onwards, with teams of peripatetic remedial teachers employed to assist small rural schools with a

small staff, and to provide advice and assistance for teachers in ordinary schools.

The Education Order (NI) 1986 (Appendix 1.1) which broadly mirrored the 1981 Education Act (England and Wales) was implemented in January 1986. In April 1987, under the Education (NI) Order 1987, control of special care schools passed from the Health and Social Services Boards (formerly the Hospital Authority) to the Education and Library Boards (the Boards). The already established peripatetic service became the Boards' provider of support for schools and developed strong links with the psychological services.

The Education (NI) Order (1996) required the Department of Education to issue a Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs (similar to and fashioned on the Code of Practice introduced into England and Wales in 1994). This was due to become operational in September 1997, but full implementation was delayed for one year. Michael Ancram, the Education Minister, announced this decision on 14 October 1996:

"I have decided that the main provisions of the 1996 Order itself should take effect from September 1997, as planned. This means that from that date the Special Educational Needs Tribunal will be established; parents will have substantial new rights of appeal; parents of statemented pupils will be able to state a preference of a grant-aided school; statements of special educational needs will have to contain more detailed information and Boards and schools will have to draw up Special Educational Needs policies.

At the same time, I believe that the concerns raised by the consultation exercise are genuine. . . . I have concluded that the Code and the time-limiting of assessments should not be

given full statutory force until September 1998.”

(DENI, 1996, p.9)

The transfer system in place during the period of this study

The transfer arrangements are administered and co-ordinated by the Boards (Appendix 1.2). Pupils wishing to be considered for a grammar school place sit the Transfer Tests (Appendix 1.4). As mentioned earlier, these were originally designed to identify pupils who were able to cope with the academic curriculum of the grammar schools. However, as pointed out by Gallagher and Smith (2000) it would appear that their current role is to ‘rank order pupils’ so that grammar schools can select those with higher grades over those with lower grades. Gallagher (2000) considers that this dilemma arises because the 1998 Education Reform Order was closely modelled on the 1988 Education Reform Order (England and Wales), and so is fashioned more to meet a comprehensive school system than the selective system in place in Northern Ireland. Under open enrolment (introduced with the Reform Act) admissions are a matter for individual school’s Boards of Governors. Each school is required to admit all pupils whose parents have expressed a preference for their children to be educated at the school, provided the number of applicants does not exceed the school’s approved admissions number. Only grammar schools may admit by ability and legally they are required to admit Grade A first, Grade B second etc. until their enrolment number is reached (Figure 1.2). After this, admission is determined by admissions criteria (Page 42). Parents, whose children are not awarded a school placement of their choice, may apply for a review by the Independent Admissions Tribunal. However, the Tribunal can only consider whether or not the admissions criteria have been applied correctly, as the legality of the criteria is a matter for the Courts (McGuinness, 2001).

The Boards have no statutory powers to enrol non-statemented children in secondary schools. Responsibility for this lies with the Board of Governors of each school, as directed by the admissions criteria of the school (Appendix 1.5). It is the responsibility of parents to bring any special

circumstances or relevant criteria to the attention of Boards of Governors when completing the Transfer Report Form in Year 7 (Appendix 1.6). Within the tests, there are no special arrangements or allowances for children with special educational needs, or where there is a long term or underlying social, medical or other problem (Appendix 1.7). However, before allocating school places the Board of Governors of each grammar school must look at any additional evidence presented to them about pupils who have been affected by illness or other special circumstance during the tests, or who have a long term special need, illness or social disadvantage. Based on this evidence the Board of Governors has the option of regrading the child's test mark, but only for use within that school.

The supply and demand of grammar schools is not uniform across Northern Ireland, and so some schools are oversubscribed whilst others may not have adequate admission applications to meet their admission number. This, in combination with the bureaucratic process of school choice, makes it possible for a child with a grade A not to get a grammar school place and for one with a grade C to gain admission. Statistics issued by DENI (1998a) show 40% of secondary school enrolments as grammar school placements. Thus, if a child does not sit the transfer tests or achieve the necessary grade, the choice of school is reduced by 40%. Religious preference and other factors, such as a individual school admission policy, may reduce the choice even further.

Pupils for whom Boards are maintaining statements of special educational needs legally should not take part in the transfer procedure including the tests. Provision for this group is made under statementing legislation as set out in Article 31 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and Article 16 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 (Appendix 1.1). Parents have a right to express a preference for a grant-aided school DENI (1996) or an independent school (DENI, 1997). However, the Board, whilst still having to maintain a statement neither has to meet the costs nor approve placement in an independent school.

Figure 1.1: The Transfer Calendar 1999/2000

May – June 1999	Information evenings for Primary 6 parents to explain the Transfer Procedure.
Sept 1999	Parents decide to opt children in or out of the Transfer Procedure Tests.
5th Nov 1999	First Transfer Test.
19th Nov 1999	Second Transfer Test
10th Dec 1999	Supplementary Test for children, who through illness or other reason missed one or both of the main tests.
Jan/Feb 2000	Secondary school Open Days/Nights.
4th Feb 2000	Boards post Transfer Test results to parents.
7 –18th Feb 2000	Primary school principals hold interviews with parents. Transfer Report forms completed for sending to Boards.
26th May 2000	Letters issued by Boards advising parents of the secondary school that has accepted their child.
7th June 2000	Final date for parents to appeal against secondary school admissions.
Sept 2000	Children begin secondary school

Source: Communication with South Eastern Education & Library Board

Figure 1.2: Grade Awards – Transfer Procedure 1999/2000

The number of pupils awarded Grade A is equal to 25% of the number of pupils in the complete year group (i.e. not just the number of pupils sitting the tests).

The proportions of the year group are :

B1	5%	B2	5%
C1	5%	C2	5%
D	The remainder of those taking the tests		

Source: Specifications of the 1999/2000 Transfer Tests 1999/2000
(CCEA, 1999, p.3)

CHAPTER TWO

Developmental Dyspraxia

The five children at the centre of this study carry a clinical diagnosis of dyspraxia, Clumsy Child Syndrome or Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). Within this study these terms are considered interchangeable. The condition referred to is developmental, that is, it is present from birth and not acquired through accident or injury, nor is it the loss of an already acquired skill.

Fox (1998) writes that in every school classroom there is usually at least one awkward child:

“distinguished by his pervasive slowness in motor tasks requiring precision, timing and accuracy [and] his acquisition of the everyday motor skills learnt by his peers without apparent effort.”

(p. 1)

Such children, he considers, often attract the label of ‘clumsy’. Fox is referring to the clinical usage of the term, which can be traced back to the medical literature of 1911 and the work of Dupré, who reported treating children with clumsiness of voluntary movement (DeAjuriaguerra & Stambak, 1969). However, it was not until the mid-1960s that case studies and empirical work relating to clumsiness began to enter the literature in any significant quantity (Missiuna & Polatajko, 1995). In the 1970s Gubbay reviewed this literature, and from his analysis described the features of what he called Clumsy Child

Syndrome (Gubbay, 1975a, 1975b, Gubbay et al, 1965) (Figure 2.1). From the early seventies to the mid-nineties, Clumsy Child Syndrome was the most frequently used term in the English medical literature to describe the child with motor problems. It was also the term preferred by general practitioners in the United Kingdom during this period (Missiuna, et al, 1994, quoted in Missiuna & Polatajko, 1995).

Figure 2.1 Key Features of Clumsy Child Syndrome as Described by Gubbay

- A typical intellectual capacity
- An impaired ability – due to clumsiness – to successfully carry out activities in the home, at school, in the gym and in the playground
- Poor handwriting and impaired drawing ability
- Some motor activities performed well and others poorly
- The necessary ruling out of subtle neurological signs, possibly indicative of other motor system impairments.

During approximately the same time frame, the term dyspraxia was introduced into the occupational therapy literature of North America (Ayres, 1972, Conrad, et al, 1983, Ayres, 1985). Whilst still in use by occupational therapists, since the mid-1990s clinicians there have preferred to use the term developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD). This matches closely the condition of Clumsy Child Syndrome, but allows for the inclusion of children with mental retardation, with the proviso that the presenting motor difficulties are “*in excess of those usually associated with it*” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 53). This extension to cover the full range of intelligence is now also generally accepted by those who use alternative names (Missiuna & Polatajko, 1994, Fox, 1998). DCD also accommodates the concomitant presence of attention deficit disorder,

with or without hyperactivity (AD/HD), which occurs in about half of all 'clumsy' children (Fox, 1998).

Dyspraxia is currently the term most widely used by parents and professionals in health and education in the United Kingdom (Chia, 1995). However, DCD is gaining popularity, particularly within the medical profession. Since the early eighties the term Clumsy Child has increasingly been considered either inaccurate (Henderson & Hall, 1982) or unsatisfactory (Sugden & Waters, 1983), mainly because the difficulties experienced are now considered to extend beyond clumsiness to include problems in language, perception, thought and emotional behaviour.

Clumsy also has an everyday connotation. For instance, in the early years of childhood, movement is awkward. It is what we expect from babies and toddlers, so we pay it no mind. If anything we marvel at those stumbling steps, messy mastications and fumbling fingers. Even when fully developed we demonstrate clumsiness to some degree, from time to time, and in particular tasks. The acceptance of this as an aspect of human frailty is indicated in our language, where we find colloquialisms such as 'butter-fingers', 'ham-fisted' or 'two left feet' to metaphorically describe our shortcomings. We laugh at clumsiness, even in its extreme. One just has to think of Michael Crawford's portrayal of the hapless Frank Spencer in *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*, the home video clips of *You've Been Framed* or the stuff of slapstick comedy. Humour has the ability to see the familiar from a new perspective (Barton, 1988). It can be liberating, such as, when we laugh at an action of our own that does not measure up to expectation (Corbett, 1996), but it can also be oppressive and devaluing to those who are the subject of its ridicule, that is, when we laugh at and not with. Margarite described this phenomenon when we met in August 1998:

"Nicholas runs funny. His feet are all over the place. He looks as though he's wearing flippers. Some of the ones in his class run behind him mocking him. I can see why they laugh, but it's not right. Poor wee love. He gets upset. "

Later in the interview Margarite described a specific situation where she considered that Nicholas was made a figure of fun:

"Last year his class went swimming on Mondays. Nicholas has bother putting on his clothes and he can't dry himself right. You know the way clothes stick . . . The other boys make fun of him. Throw his clothes about like a ball. They land in the water. One day he came home without pants and his wee bum was all sore. Mrs [class teacher] says he has to go. I said I'd help out at the pool. There's a couple of mothers who go, but Mrs [class teacher] said that Nicholas had to learn that I wasn't always able to do things for him. But laughing at him's not the answer."

The phenomenon of ridicule is experienced by both the 'labelled' and the 'unlabelled'. It is a technique of separation and of setting place value. Our social structure in the Western world thrives on hierarchies of esteem.

"The extent to which we are richer, more clever, better housed and higher in status is an indicator of our social standing power and value. Without a pecking order, we would not feel good about our superiority to others lower down the hierarchy."

(Corbett, 1996, p.4)

As children we learn this early and shape our values from interactions with parents, teachers, media images and so on. A funny walk, a pair of non-designer trainers, too fat/too thin, a bit forgetful, too clever – any display of difference provides an opportunity to establish a place in the pecking order. In this way difference becomes a vulnerability, a gap in which power can be exerted over the disempowered, and normality becomes the only guarantee of acceptance (The Open University, 1992e) (Pages 128 - 131). Notions of normality thrive within Western society and create situations where *“the victims are not heard because their mentors appeal to norms and values in justifying their behaviour”* (Kelly, 1991, p. 19). I return to this later on page 171 when I discuss how Foucault considers normalisation as one of the *“great instruments of power”* (Foucault, 1984c, p. 196).

Lorna (June 2000) also spoke of Aaron being laughed at:

“Only the younger ones will play with Aaron. He loves football . . . He’s a Leeds fan. But he can’t kick. Just flails his feet about. The ones in his class just laugh at him. It’s pitiful to watch. They set him up. He eventually runs off crying and then they laugh more because he’s too big to be crying. . . He’s just made for setting –up.”

Chia (1995) and Gibson (1996) report that outside the medical and allied professions it is almost impossible to separate the clinical understanding of ‘clumsy’ from the everyday, with most connotations carrying a negative imagery of someone who is ungainly, gawky, uncoordinated and inept. Yet, Fox (1998) assures us that children whose clumsiness significantly interferes with their ability to function do not simply represent the inevitable tail of some normal distribution of motor adroitness. Theirs, he insists, is a specific diagnosis, which is backed up by a body of research literature (Gordon & McKinley, 1980, Gubbay, 1975a, Kalverboer et al, 1990, Silva & Ross, 1980).

Clinically, dyspraxia is a central motor dysfunction (Millar, 1986) and those with the condition are described as experiencing difficulties carrying out sensory and/or motor tasks. Added to this is a high likelihood of associated problems in mood, behaviour, language, perception, relationships and academic performance (Cantell et al, 1994, Dewey et al, 1988, Fawcett et al, 1996, Fox, 1998, Hellgren et al, 1994, Missiuna, C, 1994).

Dyspraxia may show in a number of ways, which include:

- Poor balance
- Poor fine motor co-ordination (hand and eye skills)
- Poor gross motor co-ordination (whole body movements)
- Motor planning problems
- Perception difficulties
- Poor awareness of body position in space
- Difficulties with speech and/or reading and/or writing
- Emotional and behavioural problems

Dyspraxia is not a unitary disorder and each child has a personal presentation. Characteristic features overlap with other disorders (in particular AD/HD, dyslexia and autism) and children often carry more than one medical diagnosis.

At our first meeting William described the search for an explanation for Laura's presenting difficulties:

"When Laura was about three, our GP referred her to a paediatrician. She always had a blank face. It's hard to describe, but you had no idea if she was with you or not. . . . She [GP] thought it was a communication problem. We were upset when Asperger's was mentioned, but it wasn't. We were

relieved when it was just to do with co-ordination. It took the speech therapist to sort it out. But she has attention deficit as well."

(William, September 1998)

Similarly Valerie and Margarite described indecisiveness in diagnosis:

"It started off as attention deficit. He [Nathan] was hyper . . up and down, up and down, fidget, fidget, fidget. He [Nathan] was on and off Ritalin, but Dr [paediatrician] puts everybody on Ritalin, so that means nothin'. Then the special needs woman from the Board said it was dyslexia But the letter from the Board says special educational needs. Then the school doctor said it was dyspraxia and so did Dr [paediatrician]. That was after a lot of visits to the occupational therapist. She showed him how to smile. Before that he was always blank and cross looking and that puts people off. Dr [paediatrician] says it's hard to put your finger on just one name."

(Valerie, September 1998)

"The clinic put him on Ritalin for the attention problem, but it was autism that they thought first. Give the speech therapist her dues she suspected dyspraxia from the start, but nobody else would hear tell of it. I took him private to a sensory integration therapist. Cost a fortune. Then the psychologist assessed him for the speech unit and they found a whole lot of things. Auditory processing is the one they always went on about. Yeah, and short term memory. He'd had to have his tonsils out and he had grommets in and they thought it was to do with that. But he always had funny knees and was always

falling over. Now we know it's dyspraxia. But they told me last time up at the hospital that he might still have an attention problem."

(Margarite, August 1998)

In dyspraxia verbal communication skills may be significantly delayed, with some children still at the single word level at five years. Parents often express concern that children cannot be understood by other adults (Portwood, 1999). Valerie (September, 1998) spoke of this:

"He started to talk OK. I could understand him, but nobody else could. He stuck at single words. David [brother], he's only ten months younger and he used to ask for things for him. I used to think that they were too close together, but that's silly. His Granny used to get really frustrated when she couldn't make him out. His voice would go all jerky and squeaky. Then he'd start to cry. Sometimes he'd start gulping for air. She's never really taken to him since then."

The range and severity of difficulties helps determine the problems that a child will encounter, but so too will environmental demands, the social acceptability and tolerance of his/her errors, and the child's ability to cope (Millar, 1986). Lorna (November 1998) spoke of her frustration at Aaron's problems with eating:

"He [Aaron] can't manage a knife and fork. . . chews with his mouth open. It's disgusting. Mum's great she just lets him enjoy his food. I just can't stand it. We can't even go out as a family for a meal . . . unless it's the chip shop. It wasn't so bad when he was younger. People stared then, but now he's just an embarrassment. . . I do my best, but it's not enough."

In contrast when I spoke with Valerie (August 1998), she appeared to accept Nathan as “just him”:

“Nathan just hates being touched. Hates having his hair washed. Hates clothes if they’re tight. He still can’t tie shoe-laces. I used to get slip-ons, but he won’t wear them any more. You should see the backs of his shoes. All out of shape. He’s always putting things on back to front. His Daddy says he’s a mess. I suppose he is, but that’s just him. He doesn’t care He’s an awful sloppy eater. Couldn’t take him out anywhere. Has to have a packed lunch. I try to pick things that won’t make mess, but it’s hard. He only likes sloppy, soft food . . . nothing chewy and nothing with bits in it. He’s a fussy eater.”

The special educational needs of a child with dyspraxia change as the child develops, the range of skills required in school expands and new demands are placed on him/her (Penso, 1993). Valerie identified a difference between the junior and senior years of primary school:

“It wasn’t so bad in the junior school. Yet he had more problems then . . . I think! They expect so much from P4 on. He found the big playground very hard. If he was on his own in the small playground one of the dinner ladies would keep him company, but not in the big playground. I used to drive down and he’d just be standing against the wall. Then Mrs [class teacher] she sorted out that he could help the dinner ladies in the small playground. . . . The psychologist’s not too happy. She says that he should be with his own age.”

(Valerie, September 1998)

The playground was mentioned by all of the participating parents as an area of concern, with Joan (September 1998) using it to highlight Laura's perceived inability to join with others in play:

"Laura doesn't initiate play. It doesn't come naturally. I watched her at the summer scheme in the church. She was with three other girls, they were playing and chatting. She just followed them round. She would never start playing with anything herself. I always have to tell her what to do and keep it going. She doesn't seem to know the next move. I'm a teacher. . . I know what normal is."

Research suggests that boys are referred to health professionals four times more than girls. This ratio matches the research sample, but this occurrence is by accident as opposed to design. The majority of referrals are documented as being of average or above average intelligence (Hulme & Lorde, 1986). As dyspraxia occurs across the full range of intelligence, Fox (1998) suggests that this preponderance of 'average or above average intelligence' suggests that factors in addition to clinical signs may be used to decide whether or not a child is referred. The commonest documented reasons for referral in the school age child are:

- handwriting difficulties
- speech delay
- problems with self-care skills (such as dressing)
- social isolation
- lack of participation in sporting and playground activities

Pre-school the commonest reason for referral is speech and language difficulties (Portwood, 1999).

Secondary emotional difficulties may result from unresolved frustration, repeated failure and low self-esteem (Millar, 1986). As described by Valerie and Lorna these may present as physical symptoms:

“He [Nathan] definitely can’t cope with homework. Takes ages. Always a row. He just can’t take the pressure. . . . I know when he wets the bed that he’s stressed. He didn’t start that carry-on until P4, and he’s still at it off and on. I’ve got a bell thing, but it makes no difference. He doesn’t need training. It’s stress. (Valerie, November 1998)

“I know when Aaron’s stressed . . . gets pains in his legs and his stomach. One time it was really bad and he had to go into hospital . . . thought he had appendicitis . . . They sent him home next day saying that it was a stress thing. . . some sort of migraine. It can be frightening.”

(Lorna, November 1998)

Portwood (1999, p. 30) describes the child with dyspraxia as often emotional and frequently exhibiting temper tantrums which may *“reflect the mismatch between the child’s understanding of the surrounding environment and his ability to operate control over it.”* Valerie referred to this in February 1999:

“You’d have to have seen Nathan’s behaviour yesterday to believe it. It was the terrible tens instead of the terrible twos. all over a jigsaw puzzle . . there are only twenty-five pieces in it.”

Cermak (1985) has also identified primary emotional difficulties, which he considers are caused by an inability to organise emotion (similar to the child’s

inability to organise movement). Patricia (August, 1998) described this in Tiernan:

"You don't have to say much to Tiernan for him to act like a scared rabbit. At his age you'd expect cheek, but not Tiernan. Even if he's done nothin' he looks guilty . . I think his brain sticks."

As did Joan (September 1998):

"Laura gets upset very easily. It's hard to explain. It's as though she can't think what to think next. The nearest I can get to it is panic, but it's different."

Psychological problems may be related to a lack of understanding by parents, teachers and peers (Chesson et al. 1990, Gibson, 1996) and the associated social and psychological difficulties may cause greater problems than the inability to perform motor tasks (Levine & Satz, 1984). A substantive body of longitudinal research evidence suggests a link between co-ordination difficulties and the incidence of affective disorders in later life (Cantell et al, 1994, Gillberg et al, 1989, Losse et al, 1991).

The cause of dyspraxia is unknown, but associations have been made with perinatal problems, prematurity, postmaturity and being small for dates, and significant links have been made with epilepsy, meningitis and birth trauma (Gubbay, 1978, Chia, 1995). Peter (November 1999) described Margarite's birth history. This was something that Margarite was loathe to talk about, but content to allow Peter to explain:

"Margarite miscarried three babies. We're lucky to have Nicholas. She was stitched, but he still came early. He nearly

died . . . I don't think Margarite would have held up if she'd lost him . . . but he's never been right. He's always struggled."

Patricia (August 1998) on the other hand was keen to point out that despite pre and perinatal trauma, Tiernan was 'normal' at birth:

"I had nothing but bother when I was carrying Tiernan. I nearly lost him at three months and he was a Caesarian, but there was nothing wrong with him when he was born . . . not one thing."

Lorna (November 1998) described how Aaron's arrival was later than expected:

"Aaron was late. I thought he didn't want to be born. The midwife told me that first babies are often late."

Whilst this anecdotal evidence neither substantiates nor repudiates a link between birth trauma and dyspraxia, it does play a part in the parental allocation of blame and guilt. Gasgoigne (1995) describes how guilt is one of the most fundamental and persistent reactions that parents (particularly mothers) experience. Of the participating parents Margarite appeared very sensitive to the slightest criticism or negative observation:

"Nicholas's teacher says she's concerned that Nicholas doesn't play with the other children. It's my fault. He should have gone to playgroup. . . but he wasn't ready. Poor wee love."

(Margarite, June 1998)

Acknowledging blame is Margarite's way of making sense of what is happening in her life with Nicholas (Bauman 1997). In contrast, Patricia makes sense of Tiernan's difficulties by attributing blame to his educators:

"There was nothing wrong with Tiernan until he started school. Once that lot got their hands on him he learnt nothin'. They're the ones that failed him. . . not us."

(Patricia, June 2000)

Some studies suggest a familial history of coordination and development difficulties (varying from mild to severe). The participating parents all recognised traits of dyspraxia in either themselves or other family members. Valerie (September 1998), for instance, saw a lot of herself in Nathan:

"Nobody liked me either. I did better at the secondary. I made a friend there, but we were always left out. . . I could understand the work and I could write, but I couldn't get the two on paper at the same time. But I'm a good nurse. Wouldn't get in now though. Now you need GCSEs."

Although Joan did not speak directly of having had dressing problems as a child, she intimated during conversations that this was the case:

William: *"She's [Laura] getting better at getting her clothes on, but she always looks as though she's hanging together. Her Granny [maternal] sews elastic where you wouldn't think you could sew it. It helps her get things on and off."*

Joan interrupts:

"My mother always did that. She used to sew an elastic loop on my coat. I always broke the loop

*when I pulled my coat off the peg. . . .Sews
elastic on her shoe laces as well."*

Lorna likened Aaron to her brother:

*"My brother is just like Aaron. He was awful at school. He
had no friends and stood out like a sore thumb. I used to tell
people that he was adopted. He's married now. Works in a
garden centre. Now that I've Aaron I don't know how Mum
had so much patience."*

(Lorna, November 1998)

These family traits may reflect a genetic link (Gubbay, 1978, Johnstone, 1987), but in the absence of chromosomal evidence such an inference remains anecdotal. Cardon et al (1994), Smith et al (1983) and Smith et al (1991) implicate specific genes on specific chromosomes where there is dyslexia in the family. This may have relevance to dyspraxia, as the studies of Fawcett et al (1994) and Fawcett et al (1996) suggest that there are links between cerebral dysfunction, poor motor skills and dyslexia. Building on this work McPhillips et al (2000) have further suggested a link between retained primary reflexes (Appendix 2.1), poor motor functioning and specific reading difficulties. As the cerebellum is involved in both balance and higher cognitive functioning (Schmahmann & Sherman, 1998) these researchers consider that phonological weakness may be part of a deeper underlying learning deficit which is characterised by poor motor skills and poor balance. Miles & Miles (1999, 2nd edn) acknowledge that this hypothesis of cerebral development makes sense of some of the observed phenomena in those with dyslexia, such as poor judgement of temporal intervals and clumsiness, which cannot be explained by phonological deficit alone. They further speculate that:

“One might suggest that dyslexics are also ‘clumsy’ in their articulation, and it is possible therefore that the phonological difficulties owe their origin to poor timing and poor articulation.”

(Miles & Miles, 1999, 2nd edn, p.171)

I make it clear that within the study I use the terms dyspraxia and dyslexia in the medical sense, that is, as discrete medical diagnoses. Within education dyspraxia and/or dyslexia are addressed within the descriptor, specific learning difficulties (Appendix 2.2).

VIGNETTE

Ben, who has dyspraxia, wrote this poem when he was ten years old.

MY LIFE

I get up in the morning
My head's in a spin
I don't want to get up
Don't want the day to begin

I have my breakfast
I make a mess
I have a wash
Then it's time to dress

It takes me ages
To get myself dressed
My clothes go on wrong
Though I try my best.

My mum takes me to school
I go off to my class
I struggle through my work
I wish the time would pass.

My writing is messy
My drawings are too
I don't like my paintings
I wish I was like you.

I go outside at playtime
No-one will play with me

Because I can't run fast enough
I wish I was watching T.V.

I wish my life wasn't this hard
I wish it was more fun
I wish nobody laughed at me
I'd like a friend, just one

I'd like to play more sports
But I'm never picked for teams
I wish I could be better
Like I am in my dreams

Tomorrow might be a nicer day
I hope I make a friend
I'd like to be more lucky
I wish unhappiness would end.

Ben Cooper

(Dyspraxia Foundation, 1999, p.
29)

CHAPTER THREE

Faltering Steps (A study in early development)

This chapter is mainly devoted to the methodological and research design concerns of this period. However, the chapter falls short of a traditional presentation as aspects of method are also subsumed within the narrative.

I am mindful from earlier study (The Open University, 1996) that research is always a construction and that part of the rigour of the process is how explicit this is made by the researcher (Page 93). I endeavour, therefore, to openly explain the reasoning behind my choices and decisions, and to detail the shifts of emphasis that occurred during this time. A brief historical description of research methodology is included, as I consider that to understand the present, we must look over our shoulder at the developments of the past (Corbett, 1998). As I mentioned on page 32, this is not to develop a progressive explanation, but rather to seek out the details of the “*gaps and disjunctures*” (Allan, 1996, p.225) that facilitated change.

Figure 3.1 sets out the research definitions as used in this study.

Figure 3.1: Research Definitions as Used in this Study

Method is concerned with 'methodology', 'research strategy' and 'techniques'.

Methodology is concerned with the systematic and logical study of the general principles guiding an investigation.

Research Strategy refers to the particular way a particular investigation is designed and carried out.

Research Technique is a particular fact-finding manipulative operation that is used to yield social data e.g. interviewing

(Burgess, 1985, Yin, 1994)

Morrison (1998), quoting from an interview with Marion Morris, an American immunologist/bacteriologist of over eighty at the time, writes:

"The more I live, the more I marvel at C. Jung's words:

I do not live, but life is lived in me"

(p. 13)

Morrison translates these words of Jung (1875 – 1961), the founder of analytical psychology, to mean that we 'happen' to ourselves. This study 'happened' in me - a serendipitous culmination of aspects of my personal, my professional and my academic life (See introductory chapter).

In theory, having successfully completed Part A of the Doctorate programme, I was not totally unprepared for the task of carrying out educational research. However, I did not perceive myself as a 'researcher'. Rather I felt uncertain and unsure as to why I was in this position at this time.

Ball (1993), writing about ethnographic research, cites that:

“For some novitiate researchers, the entire enterprise . . . looks from the outset like a combination of ‘Star Trek’ and ‘Mission Impossible’.”

Ball (1993, p. 32)

This aptly describes how it looked to me and, as the extract from my research diary 23rd May 1998 (Figure 3.2) suggests, I was filled with *“uncertainty and the ever present possibility of failure”* (Ball, 1993, p. 32). My concern was added to by my awareness that there was no Captain Kirk on the bridge of this enterprise, no Scotty to *‘beam me up’* if things did not go to plan and no Tom Cruise to play the leading role, and so make the seemingly impossible possible. I did have a personal tutor, Dr Patricia Spencer, and the Open University doctoral staff for support, but on the ground, there was only me to find, identify, collect and make sense of the data. I was acutely aware that it was I who would *“tend to attract or repel information”* and I who would be *“the information absorber, the information analyzer, the information synthesizer and the information interpreter”* (Freilich, 1977, 2nd edn, p. 32, quoted in Burgess, 1985, p. 3).

Figure 3.2: Research Diary Entry 23rd May 1998

Day one -. I have so many fears of not being up to what I've landed myself in. What if no one wants to be interviewed? What if I'm ignored because I'm a parent? What if I make a mess of it?

My starting point in May 1998 was the research proposal that had been accepted by the doctoral team. (Figures 3.3 and 3.4 respectively set out the research title and the research question as at proposal (February 1998). The proposal was the seed-bed of my study, and like the painting on the easel in Magritte's picture, *La Condition Humaine* (Page 25) fixed in time and

matched to the landscape that it sought to represent, that is, my understanding and knowledge at that instance. Yin (1994) advises that studies rarely proceed as first envisaged. However, I was naïve enough to think that I would near enough follow the research strategy of my proposal. This naïve complacency was soon to be replaced by “*an uncomfortable period of ambiguity and confusion*” (Nias, 1993, p. 144) as I struggled to fine-tune my initial research conceptions.

Figure 3.3: The Research Title as at Research Proposal (February 1998)

The Balance of Power: Perspectives of the Decision-Making Process and the Transfer of Statemented Children with Developmental Dyspraxia (Age 11+) in Mainstream Primary Schools to Secondary schools in Northern Ireland.

Figure 3.4: The Research Question as at Research Proposal (February 1998)

How is power weighted in the decision-making processes of the transfer from primary to secondary school of children with dyspraxia in Northern Ireland?

It was at this time that I read Jennifer Nias’s account of her experience of doing educational research (Nias, 1993). To my reading, her experiences of research reflected mine, and her admissions of falling short of perfection cushioned my feelings of inadequacy. Throughout the study I found particular support and encouragement in the following lines. I echo her sentiment:

“I would like to emphasize the value of chaos as a seed bed for creativity. There were many occasions when I felt overwhelmed by the apparent formlessness or the complexity of the material. If the task had been less messy, I would not have needed to struggle so much and might have been satisfied with premature foreclosure. I have

repeatedly found that an acutely uncomfortable period of ambiguity and confusion seems to be a necessary condition for the birth of a new idea."

(Nias, 1993, p. 144)

Reflections on the Research Proposal

During proposal design (January 1998) I had consciously questioned my need to undertake doctoral study. There was certainly no externally generated need such as pressure from an employer, but there was undeniably a personal desire to achieve at this level. However, this was not enough to drive me on. Stake (1995, p, 3) describes how "*it is not unusual for the choice of case to be no 'choice' at all*" and that sometimes we "*are even obligated to take . . . the object to study*". My intrinsic interest in (Pages 103 - 104) and my need to know more about the balance of power in decision making in special education were what obligated me to continue. I reasoned that doctoral study promised not only the discipline of a timed framework, but also a measure of professional credibility.

But, why this obligation? After all, by then (January 1998) Graeme had been in home education for almost four years and within eighteen months would be sixteen and outside the age of compulsory education. Further, I considered that we were coping adequately with our roles of pupil and teacher and knew of no threat to the status quo. However within me there was a strong, urgent and persistent need to "*tell it like it is*" (Eisner, 1993, p. 49). Not a need to publicise my personal experience, such as could have been satisfied by a 'public interest' feature in a newspaper or magazine, but paradoxically a desire to be heard by the very professionals from whom I wished to remain invisible (Page 11). I wanted not just to provide description, but also to effect change – change that is political in the sense of politics as defined by Freund (1972):

"politics is the process which ceaselessly aims at framing, developing, obstructing, shifting or overturning the relationship of domination"

(Freund, 1972, p. 221 quoted in Ball, 1991, p.170)

In 'tell[ing] it 'like it is' I hoped to provide professionals with an understanding of the lives of those about whom they made decisions, and simultaneously to enlighten parents about the workings of the social system of which we are a part. (See page 80 for rationale for the choice of emancipatory research and reference to Marx's Theory). I sought to *"tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data"* (Stake, 1995, p. 77). In other words to understand the case (See page 88 for discussion of case study).

Fine Tuning the Research Proposal

My intent at proposal was to gather data at interview from statemented children, their parents, primary and secondary school staff and other Board officers, and to supplement this with document analysis. I considered that this range of perspectives would assist validity by allowing for a form of built-in triangulation as a means to crosscheck potentially tentative findings (Parlett & Hamilton, 1977). However, I soon realised that, as a lone researcher, I could not hope to cope with the logistical demands of such a wide data trawl.

I was encouraged by the studies of Chesson et al (1990) and Gibson (1996) both of which seek to illuminate the effects of dyspraxia on the family from a parental perspective, to consider focusing on the parental perspective only. This seemed apt given that the study originated in my experiences as a parent. Additionally it is parents who are responsible for making decisions within both the Transfer Procedure and the special needs legislation pertaining to school placement. This choice locates the study within the boundaries of parent-professional partnership, an area of educational policy

and practice, which has mushroomed since it was legitimised in principle by the 1981 Education Act (Armstrong, 1995). As I consider it important for a child's dignity that his/her perspective is taken into account (Chapman, 1996) I do have a sense of unease that the children's voices are unheard. However their perspectives, like those of the professionals, belong in complementary studies.

My decision at proposal to include only statemented children was based partly on my own experience as a parent, but more on my desire to define the study as educational as opposed to socio-medical. However this always sat uncomfortably with me, as dyspraxia is a medical label as opposed to an educational one (Page 66), and there is no necessary connection between a medical label of impairment and the labels of special educational provision (Norwich, 1999). Also there is no necessary correlation between the degree of impairment as medically judged and whether or not a child is statemented. I decided to leave the statementing aspect to serendipity, and to limit inclusion to children with a confirmed medical diagnosis of dyspraxia (Chapter 2).

Choosing a Methodology

I first looked to published research in a bid to ascertain if other researchers had addressed a comparable question in either a similar or a different manner. Initially I used the gateways to journals and citations provided by the Open University Library, searching first within education and special education, sociology and medicine. I limited educational research to post-1981, as it was the 1981 Education Act (England and Wales) which gave legal and official recognition to 'special educational needs' and shifted the emphasis in education from the categorisation of pupils to a concept of special education meeting children's needs (Wedell, 1985). Although I located studies surrounding the transfer from primary to secondary school in Northern Ireland (Page 77), none of these addressed a comparable question to mine.

Within medical literature I located a number of studies, mainly concerned with the recognition and characterisation of dyspraxia. Most focused on either neurological factors or the development and testing of screening instruments (Gillberg et al 1989, Hulme & Lord, 1986, Stackhouse & Snowling, 1992). In quantitative tradition these relied on numerical data with little or no space for verbal contributions from the subjects of the research, and so denied an inclusion of the perspectives that I wished to present. Two socio-medical studies, Chesson et al (1990) and Gibson (1996), which both focus on dyspraxia and the family aroused my interest. Both were carried out in a positivist qualitative tradition and, although both provided a valuable insight into the parental perspective, I considered that the findings lacked the depth of reality achieved by Spencer's (1997) emancipatory case study of children with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) (Page 90).

My studies of *E835: Educational Research in Action* (The Open University, 1996) had instilled within me an awareness of the wide range of approaches available within research. Additionally *E829: Developing Inclusive Curricula: Equality and Diversity in Education* (The Open University, 1995) had provided practical experience of carrying out small-scale educational projects within the emancipatory research paradigm. It was on the foundation of this reading and experience that I had built my research proposal, and so it seemed apt to revise and extend the literature that had supported this. I found the readings in Part III of Reader 2 of *E829: Developing Inclusive Curricula: Equality and Diversity in Education* (The Open University, 1995), which discuss the issues of equality and diversity in education both persuasive towards and supportive of the emancipatory paradigm.

VIGNETTE

Towards an Emancipatory Paradigm

Educational research, as we know it today, originated in the works of the psychologists of the 19th Century. This was a period that was committed to the rational and/or scientific elucidation of the world and the progressive accumulation of knowledge and in which ‘metanarratives’ (Lyotard, 1982) were used to rationally organise scientific, political, economic and moral positions into single systems of explanation to match the changes brought about by the industrialisation of society (Schostak, 2000a). Because scientific method was highly valued at this time, many of the early educational researchers were attracted to psychology by its experimental approach. To their perception psychology could provide “*a theoretical basis for understanding the processes of learning, which would thereby revolutionize education by putting it on a scientific footing*” (The Open University, 1994, p.7). This reliance on a scientific approach was/is sometimes referred to as ‘positivist’ because of its reliance on Auguste Comte’s particular interpretation of science, that is, one which recognises only non-metaphysical facts and observable phenomena (The Open University, 1996). The influence of psychology on educational research was further strengthened with the development of mental tests. Such tests suited well the modernist appetite for ‘norms’ and the ‘measurement of outputs’ (Page 171) as demanded by “*the revolution in social life brought by the machine age, city living and market place economics of division of labour, standardisation and mass production*” (Schostak, 2000a p. 3). In Britain in the 1950s, the influence of psychology on educational research extended to the sociology of education, which at that time was primarily concerned with measuring the inputs to and outputs from the education system. The focus of these researchers was mainly on the effects of social class on educational opportunity, and in England & Wales there was a particular interest in the impact of the 1944 Education Act (England & Wales) which introduced the

‘eleven-plus’ (Page 43). This research was not experimental in character, but nonetheless it adhered to similar measurement techniques as employed by psychology and employed the statistical analysis techniques of experimental research. In my search of the literature, I located a number of such Northern Ireland based studies concerned mainly with the effect of the religious divide (Gallagher et al, 1994), gender on performance (Gallagher, 1997) and integrated education (Warm et al, 1994) (Page 74).

The 1960s brought change to Western society as it began the development of its “*international, late-capitalist, consumer driven, eclectic style* (Morris, 1991, p. 213). This was a decade of questioning, pop cultures, youth consumerism, drug and religious experimentation, protest marches and demonstrations. A time when racial identity, feminist and other minority issues, previously repressed by the paternalism of modernism or denied by colonialism, threatened to destabilise the social order (Schostak, 2000a). Morris (1991) cites this as the moment that marked the beginning of the shift from a modernist generation characterised by the ‘grand narrative’ to a postmodern one, characterised by a ‘plurality of narratives’. However, it could be argued that the shift to postmodernism did not take hold until the late 1970s and early 1980s with the globalisation of industry and the information age, which:

“Put images of youth in North America, Britain and other European countries in virtually immediate contact; which enabled the sounds of pop to be reproduced in their millions and broadcast to audiences in their hundreds of millions”

(Schostak, 2000b, p. 7)

The French philosopher, Jean François Lyotard describes the postmodernist moment as one in which:

"One listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong."

(Lyotard, 1982, p. 76)

This is a moment far removed from the moment of the culture in which positivist research thrived. Then there had been great confidence in the knowledge and technologies of the natural sciences and great industry had flourished. Whereas this was a moment of a medley of high fashion and popular culture and a moment in which vast overarching, general systems of explanations were to lose their power, as the dreams of the early pioneers of science failed to deliver (Morris, 1991). Scientific change was no longer thought of as something brought about by a new 'subject' or 'hero' (such as Einstein or Freud) (McHoul & Grace, 1993). Further, the great industries of the past were withering and dying in an age of technology, which no longer required the great factories, identically trained labourers and massive machines of the Fordist era. In their wake, whole communities were left unemployed and communities devastated. In a sense, postmodernism was the response to this gap or disjuncture (Page 164) in the rationalist dream, bringing with it a de-construction of realities and the recognition of pluralism.

It was in this emerging postmodernist climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s that 'new sociologists of education' (The Open University, 1996) began to put forward arguments that the quantitative tradition of research did not ask deep enough questions about the phenomena that it investigated. Further they contested that such research, by concentrating only on educational opportunities, carried the assumption that schooling procedures were 'all good' and above question. This theoretical positioning marked the beginning of the critical research tradition, which developed in the 1980s. Such research is concerned, not just with exposing educational inequalities but also with questioning dominant views about the character and role of

education research in modern capitalist societies (The Open University, 1994). The theory on which this research is founded calls for the provision of a comprehensive map of the social world from which a route to social change and improvement might be elicited. Its roots lie in Karl Marx's theory of capitalist society, by which he believed he could enlighten the working class about its interests and historic role and so bring about societal change. Critical research is committed to a social science, which can help change the world as well as describe it. Its goal is emancipation, that is an eventual end to the social traditions that oppress those on the margins of society be they male, female, homosexual, lesbian or whatever (Acker et al, 1983).

Although I write of postmodernism, as if it were clearly defined phenomena, I stress that, rather than a definition, postmodernism is an understanding that change is upon us, that *"the circumstances, the beliefs, the values that gave rise to the modern age are giving way, are crumbling"* (Schostak, 2000b, p.6). One result of postmodernism is a re-discovery and celebration of difference and an acceptance and acknowledgement of groups on the margins. However, there are those who speak of nihilism, wherein values are lost in a whirlpool of relativism and pluralism where no one view is any more correct than any other, there are knowledges rather than knowledge, and cultures rather than culture (Jenks, 1997). Whilst there may be a sense of nihilism arising from the loss of the Promised Land of the metanarrative and the single explanation, I consider that total nihilism is an extreme interpretation, belonging in the minds of those who dwell only in the realms of discourse and representation (as opposed to corporeal reality). Knowledges, cultures, points of view existed before modernism and throughout modernism. How else can one account for the different strands of educational research, different political opinions or theological positions? Pluralism does not mean 'that there is no truth'. Indeed, there can be many truths, each with its own rationality (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Like Corbett (1993), I am elated by the thought of such a process which:

“can open up new options, introduce diversity and fresh voices into the narrative and release us from the old binary oppositions through a celebration of difference.”

(p. 548)

As Rabinow (1994) writes:

“The challenge is not to replace one certitude with another, but to cultivate an attention to the conditions under which things become ‘evident’, ceasing to be objects of our attention and therefore seemingly fixed, necessary and unchangeable.”

(p. xix)

To have meaning truths must be grounded in reality. Otherwise they run the risk of surviving only above the heads of those whom they seek to emancipate. I have attempted to address this within the research strategy by grounding the study in the circumstances of everyday life (Lather, 1987) (Page 89).

Rationale for Use of Emancipatory Research

I was introduced to emancipatory research in *E806: Applied Studies in Learning Difficulties in Education* (The Open University, 1992b), with subsequent understanding coming mainly from feminist research writings (Acker et al, 1983, Richardson, 1993). However, my interest lies in a social research theory, which by its nature is interdisciplinary, as opposed to a feminist research theory which implies a disciplinary boundary (Corker, 2000). I have also been influenced by the writings of disability researchers such as Michael Oliver and Vic Finkelstein, but I am conscious that this ‘rights’ perspective is dominated by people with physical and sensory impairments as opposed to learning difficulties (Mittler, 2000). I model much of this rationale on feminist and disability-rights perspectives of emancipatory research. However, I make it clear that the marginalised

group, which I seek to empower, are the parents of children with special educational needs.

The feminist tradition that has influenced my work belongs to a clearly defined group of women researchers who allow their respondents to speak for themselves. This approach matches my desire to explore and present the parents' perspectives in their own terms (Acker et al, 1983). I make it clear that I do not claim to speak for 'all parents'. Nor do I seek a definitive answer – a conclusion. Rather I seek the inconclusive - in recognition that reality is never complete, but always in process (Allan, 2000). I seek to develop understanding and generate ideas for further study (Yin, 1994).

Probably the greatest progress in the use of emancipatory research has been by feminist-postmodernist researchers. Richardson (1993) describes the science that these researchers practise and write about as one in which:

“The position of the author is linked aesthetically, politically, emotionally, with those about whom they write. Knowledge is not appropriated and controlled, but shared: authors recognize a multiplicity of selves within themselves as well as interdependence with others, shadows and doubles. Alternate selves are interwoven by common threads of lived experiences. It is this feminist process of “knowing/telling” which [leads] women listening . . . to feel that [the researcher] is talking about [her] own life – or theirs.” (p, 705)

I was and remain attracted to the process of “knowing/telling”, which I visualise as a movement between dimensions. In the first dimension is the ‘telling’ of the story in the words of the parents, in the second is the ‘knowing’ of the researcher, while in the third is the ‘life experience’ of the listener. Connecting these dimensions are invisible threads of common experience, which allow the listener to shift between dimensions, yet never

leave their own experience or dimension. In such a process I do not have to 'pretend' to be absent. Instead, through the threads of common experience my story becomes that of the researched and the story of the researched becomes that of mine in a reciprocity of meaning. This is a science far removed from that of traditional positivist research (Page 78) in which the researcher is written out of the process in a bid to present the objective view, the absolute knowledge (Page 11). This is a science, which asks not "What is truth?" but rather, "What are the truths that have been oppressed by the dominant truth?" and questions the validity and reliability of positivist methodologies, which rely on a single truth that is independent of the researcher.

Oliver (1992) describes emancipatory research as *"about the facilitating of a politics of the possible by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs"* (p. 101). This includes oppression within social research, the experience of the traditional form of which Oliver (1991, quoted in Morris (1995, p.209)) describes as *"alienation – in the sense of alienation from the product of research, from the research process, from other research subjects and from oneself"*. The term alienation as used by Oliver originates in Marxism where it referred to the process of labour whereby workers became estranged from the products they produced (The Open University, 1995). In a critique of social research Rowan (1981) explains Marxist alienation in the research process as meaning:

"... treating people as fragments, This is usually done by putting the person into the role of 'research subject' and only then allowing a very restricted range of behaviour to be counted. This is alienating because it is using the person for someone's own ends - the person's actions do not belong to that individual, but to the researcher and the research plan."

(Rowan, 1981, p. 93)

Traditional positivist educational research (Page 76) can be seen in the terms, as described by Rowan (1981), as alienating to the parents of children in education. Generally such research matches the aims of those in particular positions of management (that is domination) within education, and has focused on projects such as curriculum evaluation, examination of the effects of streaming and the measurement of educational opportunities. Thus what is considered problematic and worthy of research is what professionals see as problematic. Although there are those within this group who will have children, the parental perspective is generally absent from this world. Parents, as a rule, are not consulted about issues such as what should be researched or how the research should be carried out. Rather, research is presented by professionals as a *fait accompli*, with the inherent message that the professionals know best, that schools are in the right and that research belongs only to the researcher and the research plan (The Open University, 1996). There are those who might argue that parent-professional partnership legislation introduced in the 1981 Education Act (England and Wales) and its strengthening in subsequent Acts, indicates that parents do have a say in what happens at management level. However most significant power still remains in the large institutions of State and Government, and as Armstrong (1995) asserts:

"The real significance of partnerships between professionals and parents may lie not in the incorporation of parents into decision-making processes but rather in the incorporation of educational professionals into the state bureaucracy."

(p. 11)

Research commissioned and published by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENIa, 1998) suggests that in Northern Ireland, schools overall consider that consulting parents for their opinions only invites additional problems. Bastiani and Wolfendale (1996) also note that although individually some parents do report an increased involvement with

professionals, collectively parents still have little or no power base in school, either at local or national levels. Such writings support the belief that traditional research is carried out by those in power for those in power on those with little or no power (Acker et al, 1983). This provides for a perpetuation of an educational research world in which parents, despite their important role of providing children to fill schools and thus keep professionals in employ, are invisible and largely unconceptualised. In other words, they are alienated. Traditional research further alienates by the way that it is carried out, as the interviewer is often presented as the expert and the interviewed as *"inexperienced in research"* (Oliver, 1990, p.8). This produces a hierarchy, which only serves to reinforce the dominant view of the researcher.

Smith (1988), building on this recognition of research as alienated knowledge, describes feminist research as characterised by a method which:

"at the outside of enquiry creates a space for an absent subject, and an absent experience, that is to be filled with the presence and experience of actual women speaking of and in the actualities of their everyday world."

(p. 107)

I want to tell the story of the parents and thus require a space for their voice. Emancipatory research promises not only this space, but also:

"the systematic demystification of the structures and processes which create [marginalisation] and the establishment of a "workable" dialogue between the research community and [marginalised] people in order to facilitate the latter's empowerment."

(Barnes, 1992, quoted in Barnes, 2000, p. 49)

The ideal is that parents should be self-emancipating. As researcher I can contribute to this process by analysing how the personal is political and “*by pushing that analysis beyond individual experience to comprehension of its determination in the larger socio-economic structure*” (Acker et al, 1983, p. 424). The writings of Michael Oliver and Vic Finkelstein hold as an example of making the personal political. They have been arguing for years against the medical model of disability (Page 136), and in so doing they have been making the personal political in the sense that “*they have insisted that what appears to be an individual experience is in fact socially constructed*” (Morris, 1995, p. 215). However there is another aspect of making the personal political and that is the taking control of and giving voice to the experience of being a parent and thus asserting the value of our lives. It is my understanding that in giving voice there must be room for the painful as well as the joyous. My lived experience leads me to believe that this includes taking account of the corporeal reality of pain, whether physical, emotional or both, as pain and suffering are much too complex to be explained by social models alone (Norwich, 1999).

My aim is to provide an interpretation of the everyday experiences of these parents (Page 13). However, as researcher I must take the explanation beyond the immediate individual experience by locating it in society and history. Marx believed that people’s spontaneous understanding of themselves and their lives is a product of their social circumstances and thus ideological. As such “*it reflects and supports the distorted form of human society in which they live*” (The Open University, 1996, p. 29). By enlightening the people of this he saw a means to emancipate the working class and bring about progressive change. This in turn would lead to an emancipation of society as a whole. Like Marx I strive to overcome ideology. However, my thinking is tempered by concerns that if one ideology is overcome, will a new ideology, with its own ideological bias in the treatment of research evidence not just take its place (The Open University, 1995). Foucault (1984b) comes to my assistance here when he writes:

"It is necessary to think . . . not in terms of 'science' and 'ideology', but in terms of 'truth' and 'power'. . . It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power), but of detaching power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time." (p. 74)

"Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. . . . The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state."

(Foucault, 1982, p. 216)

The diversity among parents makes for a further weakness in making the personal political, as whilst it is valid that each begins from his/her personal experiences, it is equally valid that these too are political and shaped by cultural prejudices (Pages 29 - 30). Thus for analysis I cannot rely on my perceptions alone. To do so would be take on the mantle of the single truth. Rather I need to extend beyond the personal and to challenge the limits of my own personal experiences by learning from the diversity of others (Morris, 1995). I have attempted to address this within the study by:

- adopting a process of on-going analysis (Pages 21 & 119)
- the process of knowing/telling (Page 81)
- cross-informing between the data collected and existing literature and
- an understanding that I seek to generate a questioning of the status quo as opposed to a single truth (Oliver, 1992).

Developing a Research Strategy

Based on the experience and understanding gained during my studies of Part A of the Doctorate programme, case study was the named strategy within the research proposal. Chesson at al (1990), Gibson (1996) and Spencer (1997) (Page 77) consolidated this decision and I set to substantiate my choice. Yin (1994) suggests several ways of approaching social science research, including experiments, surveys, histories and case study. Further he cites that each strategy has its own peculiar advantages and disadvantages, which depend on (a) the type of research question, (b) the control the researcher has over events and (c) whether the focus is on contemporary or historical phenomena (Yin, 1994). To assist with defining a suitable strategy to meet individual researcher’s needs, Yin (1994) provides a basic categorisation scheme which divides questions into the types of ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘why’ and provides a table, which is reproduced in Figure 3.5. I tested my choice of strategy using this table.

Figure 3.5: Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

Source: COMOS Corporation (reproduced in Yin, 1994, p. 4)

STRATEGY	FORM OF RESEARCH QUESTION	REQUIRES CONTROL OVER BEHAVIOURAL EVENTS?	FOCUSES ON CONTEMPORARY EVENTS?
EXPERIMENT	how, why	yes	yes
SURVEY	who, what, where, how many, how much	no	yes
ARCHIVAL ANALYSIS	who, what, where, how many, how much	no	yes/no
HISTORY	how, why	no	no
CASE STUDY	how, why	no	yes

(a) The type of research question.

How is power weighted in the decision making process in the transfer from primary to secondary school in Northern Ireland? This is a **how** question. The chart identifies either a history or a case study.

(b) The control of the researcher over events.

Emancipatory research is interested in contesting relations of domination and calls for a strategy that does not reproduce the type of domination that it so detests (Gitlin et al, 1993). Within this paradigm researchers must not impose their reality on the researched, rather I seek a situation where the parents have an active voice and so contribute to the production of the research (Acker et al, 1983). Thus I want a strategy in which I will not have control over behavioural events. From the table and taking (a) into account the strategy of choice remains either a history or a case study.

(c) Focus on contemporary events

Lather (1987, p. 262) writes that emancipatory research must be “*grounded in the circumstances of everyday life*”. This can be applied to both contemporary and historical studies, but Oliver (1992, p. 107) further cites that an emancipatory methodology must build on “*trust and respect*” and build in “*participation and reciprocity*”. For this to happen there must be access to actual behavioural events i.e. contemporary events.

The combination of (a), (b) and (c) identifies case study as an appropriate strategy by which to address the research question.

Case Study

Case study has a long history in both anthropology and sociology, where it is generally associated with ethnography (Vulliamy & Webb, 1995). However, not all ethnographic research produces case studies, and in education, case study can extend to areas such as evaluation, as exemplified in Parlett and Hamilton’s (1977) description of “illuminative evaluation”, or be based on the accumulation of documents as in Stenhouse’s (1978) ‘case record’.

Indeed, case study is a comprehensive research strategy, which can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Yin, 1994). In this study, my interest lies in a form of case study, which is primarily documentary and descriptive, but which reaches out from *"the experiences of one group to connect with the experiences of others"* (Walker, 1981, p.2). This is achieved by a process called 'naturalistic generalisation' (Stake, 1995), which *"allows the reader to move between the documented instance to instances s/he knows first hand"* (Walker, 1981, p.1). Emancipatory research puts the researcher back into the research and thus in emancipatory case study the process of 'naturalistic generalisation' is extended to the knowing/telling process of the feminist paradigm (Page 81). This 'putting of the researcher' back into the research calls for a reconceptualisation of *"the canons by which research is judged"* (Gitlin et al, 1993, p. 207). I consider this on page 93, but first discuss my choice of techniques for data collection and analysis.

Research Techniques – Information Gathering and Analysis

Gollop (1989, quoted in The Open University, 1995, p. 58) cites that the fundamentals of emancipatory research are reciprocity, gain and empowerment.

Reciprocity so that neither the researched nor researcher is in subservience to the other (Gitlin et al. 1993).

Gain through the generation of knowledge that is usable by the parents themselves and, yet, capable of extending to the wider community, including those in power and

Empowerment from the study's own understanding of the lived experiences of parents - extending to the wider community by the process of 'knowing/telling' of feminist research and/or the 'naturalistic generalisation' of case study.

Lather (1987) argues that these principles can be built in to the research through self-reflection and a deeper understanding of the research by the researched, *"grounded in the circumstances of everyday life"* (Lather, 1987, p. 262).

Yin (1994) describes the interview as one of the most important, perhaps even essential, resources of case study information. Stake (1995, p.64) adds to this when he writes that "*the interview is the main road to multiple realities.*" I understood that the case would not be seen the same by everyone, and looked to interviewing as a means to discover and portray the multiple views of the case (Stake, 1995). This fitted well with the concept of 'truths' (Page 82) that I sought through the descriptions and interpretations of others, as guided by an emancipatory methodology. Of the three formats of interview described by Yin (1994) – open-ended, focused and survey – the open-ended interview promised to best meet my aim of reciprocity. This I reasoned would permit a greater opportunity of exchange between the researched and the researcher. Thus allowing for an increased possibility of mutual understanding. I reckoned that structured interviews, such as focused or surveys, would only serve to widen the gap between the researched and the researcher (Acker et al, 1983).

From Chesson et al (1990), Gibson (1996) and particularly Spencer (1997) (Page 75) I had gained a sense of wanting depth as opposed to width in the data that I collected. I also had a sense from my reading of Minichiello et al (1995, 2nd edn) that I wanted to focus on the informant's perceptions of self, life and experience as expressed in his or her own words. Minichiello et al (1995, 2nd edn) describe this as achievable through the conversation process of in-depth interviewing, as it draws on indigenous knowledge i.e. knowledge which belongs naturally to a place, and allows for questioning that builds on the responses to previous questions. This facilitates the grounding of the study in the circumstances of everyday life (Page 80), and also allows for a testing and rechecking of emerging issues, which in turn provides a form of built-in rigour. I aimed to start initial analysis while the fieldwork was in process to enable constant comparison and grounded theorising (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and thus provide for progressive focusing on to particular areas of data collection (Ball, 1991). This promised

a means by which categories would emerge from the interviews, thus allowing for the parents' points of view to be taken into account before deriving theory (Brownlee & Carrington, 2000).

I discuss the practicalities of interviewing on page 12 and of analysis on page 119.

The opportunity within interviews to discuss beliefs and experiences allows for the facilitation of reflection by both the researched and the researcher (Minichiello et al, 1995) and is a means to achieve the fundamental principles of emancipatory research as cited by Lather (1987) (Page 89). Such reflection has the potential to extend beyond the interview experience as parents discuss the interviews with family and friends. The following extract from an interview with Valerie exemplifies this:

Sylvia: *"How has it gone since we last met?"*

Valerie: *"OK, I suppose. . . . Remember when you were here last time and I said that Nathan was getting on OK. . . . Well after you'd gone his Granny said that he wasn't. I couldn't stop thinking about it and I got really angry with myself when I caught on."*

Sylvia: *"Why was that?"*

Valerie: *"Well he wouldn't speak to me when I was going to work on Thursday mornings. . . . Then it dawned on me. The others were doing practice tests on a Thursday. He's in the 'stars'*. They call them that so that they don't feel stupid [laughs]. God, but I'm stupid. I should be in the 'stars' . . . Should*

have realised. . . . Now what I said last time isn't right."

Sylvia: *"How's that?"*

Valerie: *"Well, he wasn't doing OK and I said he was. But you can change it, now that I've told you the right way. There'll be other bits that need changed as well. It's funny how you always think of what you should have said. I see now why you want us to check that it's right."*

* The 'stars' is the name given to the group of children in Nathan's class who are not sitting the transfer tests. In Aaron's school they are called 'the A- Team'.

Here Valerie refers to the checking process of respondent validation, which was included to allow participants the opportunity to read, make comment on and discuss (if they so wished) drafts of their interviews and telephone conversations (Walker, 1981). The aim was for data validation in the form of member checking (Yin, 1994), but I accept that as Burgess (1985) points out this process may merely 'appear' democratic, as the 'associate reader' may not have the time, inclination or motivation to comment unless blatantly misinterpreted. Valerie was the only parent to suggest making changes throughout the whole study. However her concerns were not with how I had recorded the event i.e. respondent validation but rather with a change in her interpretation of reality arrived at by discussion with her mother and subsequent reflection. This caused me to reflect on the construction of reality and its effect on validity. (Page 101 - 102).

Considerations of Validity

Emancipatory research puts the researcher back into the research and so makes the researcher an intrinsic instrument of the process. The researcher no longer writes him/herself out of the process in a bid to appear objective, rather the researcher acknowledges her/his embedded prejudgements and leaves them open for scrutiny (See discussion of transparency on page 29). At the heart of this is an attempt to escape "*The 'Cartesian Anxiety'*" (Gitlin et al, 1993, p. 207) of traditional research, which considers methods either relativistic or objective. I agree with Corbett (1998) when she points out, that when we examine others we only have our own attitudes as measures. These attitudes reflect our individual, our institutional and our societal positioning, and in the construct of this study I will have unavoidably made moral as well as cognitive judgements (Schwandt, 1996). I seek to produce 'truths' as opposed to an objective view of reality, and it is by these 'truths' that I ask for the validity of this study to be measured i.e. the rigour and transparency of the research. The measure of my validity is therefore dependent on the adequacy of my reflexivity, the adequacy of my disclosure and the adequacy of the process of knowing/telling (Page 81). Respondent validation formed part of this bid for transparency (Page 92).

Reflexivity

It was not until I read Ball's description of reflexivity as an 'internal conversation' that "*provides the possibility of technical rigour in the ethnographic process*" (Ball, 1993, p. 33) that I developed an understanding of the process of reflexivity. Prior to this I had an understanding of sorts, but I knew that there was a still a gap between the knowing and the understanding. Vygotsky and Piaget both believed that true knowing means knowing that you know (Watson, 2000), and I sensed that I did not truly know.

When reading Ball (1993) I was taken back to the mid-1970s when I spent months of physical immobility because of myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). Too weak to move my muscles myself, I relied on my husband and mother

to move my body to prevent muscle contraction and wastage. I was sensitive to light and sound and so lay in a quiet and darkened space. In my waking hours (often through the night), the only roads I could travel were those of my mind; the highways and byways of 'internal conversation'. Spencer (1997) writes of similar experiences, and refers to the phenomenon as an "*in-depth self-analysis*" (p. 201). It is my understanding that in the reflexive process the researcher attempts by conscious in-depth analysis to reach an understanding of the complex and unfathomable blend that is the 'Self' and the identity (Page 165). This is fused with the understanding that the researcher does not simply go out into the world and collect data, rather the researcher socially constructs the research process as a means to stimulate data collection (Ball, 1993). Just as interviewing is a technique by which a researcher can gather data, reflexivity is a technique by which the researcher can bind the social to the technical and so account for him/herself as an instrument of the process (Pages 18 - 19).

In this study I was the "*fly in the soup*" (Spencer, 1997, p. 52) as opposed to the "*fly on the wall*" (Ball, 1993, p. 45), and every decision I made (or failed to make) had a ripple effect on the research process. My choices, my omissions, what I noticed and what I failed to see all influenced and shaped the research outcome. There is a paradox when it comes to confronting the ways that we do not see. Goleman (1998, p. 24) explains this eloquently in the form of one of R. D. Laing's* 'Knots':

*"The range of what we think and do
is limited by what we fail to notice.
And because we fail to notice
that we fail to notice
there is little that we can do
to change
until we notice
how failing to notice
shapes our thoughts and deeds.*

* The British psychiatrist, R. D. Laing (1927 – 1989), was noted for his radical views on schizophrenia. His thoughts on madness are akin to those of Michel Foucault. *Knots* (1970) is a collection of his poetry.

Reflexivity enabled me to interpret happenings in the field, as opposed to simply reacting to external stimuli (Blumer, 1969), by encouraging me to see that which I otherwise might have failed to notice. This was demonstrated in my first interview with Patricia in August 1998 (Page 111):

“The psychologist is the one to get my son educated. He’s the boss – the big shot. There’s nothin’ they can do without him.”

As I jotted these words in my notebook, my head was racing with thoughts such as ‘But that isn’t right’, ‘He’s just a cog in a wheel’ and ‘He has to act in a legal framework’. I so wanted to interrupt, but I was restrained by the discipline of knowing that this was not just an everyday conversation. This was an artificial conversation with the specific purpose of “*focusing on [Patricia’s] perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in ...her own words*” (Minichiello et al, 1995, p. 61) and to interrupt the flow of her words would have shown a disrespect for her reality. Later, through reflection I realised that only a few years earlier I too had considered that the educational psychologist was the ‘man’ to get Graeme educated. This too was a staging post in the process that is my reality.

My senses were heightened to concerns about the ‘insider’ knowledge that I brought to the study. From earlier reading I knew that some argue that only those who are involved in a social situation can truly understand it (Hammersley, 1993). Such arguments assume that valid knowledge only comes from direct contact with reality. Yet, if this were true, why for instance should there be any disagreement between the drivers involved as to who is at fault in a road traffic accident, or why should I have failed to

instantly recognise what once was my reality? One possible explanation, as I alluded to on page 20, is that all knowledge is a construction. Of course there is still a reality out there, but we have no direct knowledge of it (Hammersley, 1992). Whilst I may be persuaded by this argument I can neither prove nor disprove it. Therefore I return to what Hammersley (1993, p. 218) refers to as “*more specific and defensible methodological arguments*” of how ‘insider’ knowledge can benefit the research situation:

1. As the parent of a son with dyspraxia I have access to thoughts, feelings and experiences that another might not have. Thus I have a deeper understanding of the behaviour of the participants than another might have.
2. I have a long-term experience of the phenomenon under study and thus I have additional personal experience to draw upon.
3. As a parent and educational advisor to the Dyspraxia Foundation I already have relationships with others from whom I can seek additional information.

Within each of these there is validity, but for each there is also a counter argument:

1. My motives in carrying out the research may not be clear even to me, as self-knowledge is not immediately given. Understanding often requires viewing from a wider context and may be difficult for someone so closely involved.
2. The information that I have may be limited by my own experience. Thus I may have a distorted view, and my own concerns and misconceptions might limit my interpretation.
3. My roles as parent and educational advisor may cause me to operate in a certain way in order to conform to expectation.

I reasoned that ‘insider’ knowledge could be advantageous in this particular research because it has the potential to help in the gaining of the confidence of the parents. However, I do not believe that ‘insider’ knowledge guarantees valid knowledge, any more than ‘outsider’ knowledge prevents it (Hammersley, 1993). Rather, whether an insider or an outsider, I must

scrutinise the motives behind my decisions as part of the process of reflexivity (Page 93).

Within the reflexive process, I questioned not just my own motives, but also the effect on data collection of how I was perceived by the participants. Ball (1993) compares the study of the Niyhia people of South Western Tanzania by Gartrell (1979) with that of an earlier study by Slater (1976). This may seem far distant from Northern Ireland, but the phenomenon that I wish to explain is part of the social research process and not dependent on geographical location. Slater described the Niyhia as *“hostile, withdrawn, apathetic, suspicious, and as exhibiting little individuality”* while Gartrell describes them as *“friendly, vital, warm, and welcoming”* (Ball, 1993, p.44). Both of these researches are women, but Slater was a lone researcher and Gartrell travelled with her husband. Slater travelled by Land Rover, while Gartrell did not. Slater also employed an interpreter, who is described by Ball as an educated but arrogant man. Ball says nothing about the adequacies or otherwise of the resulting research studies, but suggests that Slater may have transgressed the Niyhia’s established views that women should be submissive and dominated by men. Whatever the causation, the different findings of the two researchers were affected by the interaction between the researched and the researcher, and the perceptions of the researcher by the researched.

Goleman (1998) discusses how what we perceive and share with others can be muted or heightened depending on our perception of the circumstances and what is expected of us. He provides the following example:

“What words do these fragments suggest to you?”

s _ x

s h i _

f _ _ k

“Reading these you should have no trouble completing them, more likely than not as suggestive or off-colour words. But imagine yourself in a room with a stranger, reading aloud the words you make of these fragments. Your responses might take another turn, if only to avoid embarrassment. Your thoughts might, too.”

(Goleman, 1998, p.61)

Thus, I came to appreciate, that the way in which I was perceived by the participants would affect the type and quality of data collected (Measor, 1985). I wanted to be accepted as an ‘insider’ and a ‘learner’; an ‘insider’ to promote trust and respect, and a ‘learner’ to encourage telling.

Figure 3.6 The Research Diary

In the research diary, I:

- Recorded ideas as they occurred and made notes on their refinement or dismissal. This provided a means to evaluate and quantify my progress.
- Noted my feelings of happenings in the study and also noted my thoughts on the impact of these thoughts on the study.
- Noted happenings outside the study that appeared of significance.
- Detailed descriptions of interview surroundings and my immediate thoughts of how well/not so well an interview had gone.
- Captured pre- and post-interview discussions and observations that did not form part of the negotiated data collection. These helped me at a later date to form a fuller picture of an individual or situation.

The Research Diary

I found that writing up my diary (Figure 3.6) in the evenings facilitated and encouraged thinking. Like Nias (1993) I came to value thinking as an extremely valuable activity within the study as a whole. Thinking was the

life-breath of my reflexivity (Page 93) and my diary was an important reflexivity tool as it enabled me to acknowledge on record the impact of my feelings and lived experiences (past and present) on the research project.

Each entry in the research diary is the gateway to a river of memory and experience, a prompt to thoughts that otherwise might lie undisturbed until a chance déjà vu released them again into consciousness (Cixous, 1994). The importance of this phenomenon was reinforced by its happening during my conversations with parents, when I was often reminded of personal experiences, which until that instance had been buried deep and lost from conscious memory (Page 20). This was illustrated very clearly one Thursday afternoon (June 1999) when Margarite phoned to tell me that her son Nicholas had not wanted to go to school that day. His class was going on an outing to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Margarite had expected him to look forward to the trip. When she phoned, shortly after two o'clock she was crying and very upset:

"I'm sorry to bother you. . . . But there's nobody else . . . I don't know what to do. His Daddy has stormed off. . . He says I've made Nicholas like this. . . Maybe I have."

Gradually Margarite settled enough to explain what had happened:

"He [Nicholas] hates being put off his routine. He cried all night and he wouldn't get up. I wanted him to stay. . . . I was going to send word that he was sick, but his Daddy made him get up. Nicholas was crying and screaming. The taxi came and his Daddy was going to send him on his own . . . The driver said that I'd have to go as well. When we got to school he wouldn't get out. He was holding on to the door handle and screaming."

At this point Margarite's sobbing increased and it took a few minutes before she was calm enough to continue:

"Mrs C and Miss H came out and dragged him into school. Mrs C told me to go home. The ones at the gate were staring at me . . . I was crying, but not one spoke to me. The driver said that it wasn't on . . . I don't know if he meant me or what. . . . Mrs C phoned before lunch. Said that I wasn't to leave Nicholas to school for a while. I don't know what she's going on about. I don't go with Nicholas. He goes in the taxi. She said that I make him clingy and that 'out of control' children don't look good for the school."

I was carried back to a similar incident when Graeme was eight years old. Over a period of weeks Graeme had become very withdrawn, and with each day it was proving harder and harder to get him to school. The educational psychologist and his teacher said that it was essential that I did not give in to him as that would only lead to school phobia. This particular day I got him as far as the school gates, but once there he grasped the railings tightly and refused to let go. Graeme has asthma, which is exacerbated by stress, and I remember vividly the struggles for breath between his screams, and the whites of his knuckles from holding so tightly to the school railings. Those leaving their children to school just stared. Two teachers dragged Graeme into school, with him pulling towards me and against them, screaming, "Mummy. . . Mummy . . . Mu.m..m...y" I still find it hard to accept that I could inflict such cruelty on another human being, let alone my son. Yet, this was a turning point; a juncture at which the ambivalence and hostility that I faced enabled me to question what until then I had suppressed (The Open University, 1992f). On reflection I realised that, although I was unaware of it at the time, this was the point at which I first questioned the rightness of cultural conventions as opposed to natural desires; the rightness of normalisation (Shepherdson, 2001, p. 18) (Page 171)

Fox (1993, p. 39) describes how in a gynaecological examination staff:

“adopt a nonchalance, implying both that they are doing something which is medical, not sexual or cruel, and that they wish the patient similarly to take the examination in a matter-of-fact way.”

Emerson (1970) cites that this works because the staff act as though they have a right to do what they are doing, but adds that the nonchalance of the patient is dispensable because it only validates the staff's behaviour. Without any hint of doubt as to their course of action, the members of the teaching staff dragged Graeme and Nicholas into school screaming and kicking. Their nonchalance implied that what they were doing was in the interests of education, not aggressive or cruel, and their actions were validated by Margarite and I conforming to social expectation. Any resistance on our part would only have served to validate that we were part of the problem, and was thus dispensable. These scenes worked not just because of the shared meaning that it is normal for children to go to school, but because of the shared acceptance by the actors of the superiority of the teachers' interpretation of the situations over that of the parents. This reveals a discontinuity and asymmetry of power relations in this setting. Transposed to another social space, such as a shop or a cinema and the happenings would read differently.

Many, but by no means all, of the memories awakened by the words of the parents, were painful to recall. For this transportation to the past to happen the experience as described did not have to share the weave of mine; a thread of common reference sufficed (Eisner, 1993). Indeed, these interruptions pulled me up sharp to the realisation that my conscious memory had over time 'remade' my story of my experiences with Graeme, so that some events retained significance whilst others were banished to my subconscious. Measor (1985) suggests that there are 'special events' in

people's lives, which lead to major decisions or directions being taken and that these take on a 'special meaning' and gain a 'special status'. These 'special events' are retold, over and over, and in the retelling a new sense is made of the experience with a retaining of some memories and a 'forgetting' of others. Goleman (1998) places a different slant on the remaking of experiences by suggesting that this is part of human psychological pain response and that by reappraising the situation we put out of our mind unpleasant facts. The former may be the means by which we achieve the latter or in achieving the latter we arrive at the former, but whatever the process this is a form of coping - a 'psychic' closing off that provides a comfortable operating distance between then and now (Lifton, 1967). These considerations reinforced within me an understanding of the complexity and immeasurable depth of the reality that I sought to interpret (Page 20). Initially I felt overwhelmed by the questions and thoughts that this elicited. How could I justify my data if both the researcher and the researched were continually reconstructing reality? By 'thinking and talking . . . talking and thinking', I reasoned that my position was no different to that of any other researcher. I settled on an acceptance of the data of the moment, as I reckoned that a revised 'reality' would always be just a thought away. However, as I touch on in the narrative, my worry that my intrusion into the lives of these families might stir up the pain of earlier experiences was not so readily reconciled. Neither could I ignore that my very presence in the lives of these individuals altered reality. I am reminded here of J. B. Priestly's stage play *'Dangerous Corner'* (1932), which portrays how the action (or inaction) of one person can dramatically change the course of life events. The complexity of social interaction is such that none of us know in advance which action of ours or an other may prove to be a 'dangerous corner'. Each and every social act that we perform affects beyond the personal, and these considerations instilled within me a heightened sense of the ethical responsibilities placed on me by the research process. I realised that once I stepped outside the personal, and invited participants to share their personal that I would be ethically obligated to negotiate with them the terms of access to the data that I proposed to collect.

VIGNETTE

In my reflections I was carried back to the early 1970s when I was a student in Bristol. Although studying science, our course demanded that we broadened our concepts by studying a different subject to our own on Wednesday afternoons. For one term this was sociology. We focused on the writings of the American sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1916 – 1962), and in particular his books *The Power Elite* (Mills, 1956) and *The Sociological Imagination* (Mills, 1959). Mills is credited as having contributed to our present understanding of social processes and structure, and, by setting the groundwork for a more inclusive social theory, to have spurred on a critical approach to power (Giddens, 1997). Mills wrote about America from an American perspective at a time when American social theory was dominated by Talcott Parsons and other functionalists (Collins, 1994). The functionalists argued that social institutions fulfilled specific functions in society, which contributed to ‘maintaining the social order’. Everything had a purpose, and it was all for the general good. Mills challenged this notion in his book *The Power Elite* (1956). Much of Mills’s analysis of the power elite fits with its own time and place – Cold War America. However, if we look at the conceptual framework rather than the specifics, we find that Mills challenges sociologists to look behind the seemingly natural facade of bureaucracies and large institutions and to analyse who actually has control, and who sets the agenda, goals and values in society (Collins, 1994). Mills’s theory was not entirely new as it drew heavily on the classic European social theorists and particularly on Weberian concepts (Seidman, 1994). It also had strains reminiscent of Marx’s contention that those in power also control the means of intellectual production, using them to manufacture values and ideology in ways instrumental to retention of their own power (Collins, 1994).

I acknowledge that the roots of my interest in power relationships can be traced back to those Wednesday afternoon tutorials of the early 1970s.

Paraphrasing Kant, Eisner (1993, p. 52)) writes that *“percepts without frameworks are empty, and frameworks without percepts are blind”* and continues that *“an empty mind sees nothing”*. In the early 1970s I saw nothing in *The Power Elite* or *The Sociological Imagination* – Mills was just another ‘to do’ in my student timetable. Over a quarter of a century later, through my parenting experiences I have secured a framework by which I can give sight to those blind concepts. It is to the last chapter of *The Sociological Imagination*, where Mills writes about intellectual craftsmanship, that I turn (in support of a reflective diary) for the following quote:

“. . . [Y]ou must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it. In this sense craftsmanship is the centre of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product upon which you may work. To say that you have ‘experience’ means for one thing that your past plays into and affects your present. As a social scientist, you have to control this rather elaborate interplay, to capture what you experience and sort it out; only in this way can you hope to use it to guide and test your reflection, and in the process shape yourself as an intellectual craftsman. But how can you do this? One answer is: you must set up a file, which is I suppose, a sociologist’s way of saying: Keep a journal. Many creative writers keep journals: the sociologist’s need for systematic reflection demands it.”

(Mills, 1959, p. 196)

CHAPTER FOUR

Meeting the Parents

To make initial contact with parents I wrote to the Management Committee of the Dyspraxia Foundation (Northern Ireland) requesting access to their membership (Figure 4.1). Membership covers Northern Ireland and draws from across the community. At this time I had been educational advisor to the Dyspraxia Foundation in Northern Ireland for just over three years, and already had police clearance.

I reasoned that this organisation potentially provided a concentration of parents of children with dyspraxia, limited initial access to a single point and supported my status as a researcher from outside education. In contrast access through schools potentially presented a random chance of contacting a school with a child identified with dyspraxia at the transfer stage, involved multiple points of initial access (logistically difficult to manage by a single researcher) and risked consolidating any thought that I was from the education system (Pages 97 - 98).

Figure 4.1: Letter to Dyspraxia Foundation Management Committee

Home Address

30 May 1998

Dear Madam Chair

Following our recent telephone conversation, I now seek formal permission from the Regional Committee of the Dyspraxia Foundation (Northern Ireland) to access your membership for volunteers to take part in a research study, which I propose to present for a Doctorate in Education with the Open University.

The proposed study will follow the transfer of children with dyspraxia from primary to secondary school and will run for approximately three years. The aim of the research is to tell the story from the family side as opposed to the professional.

I am willing to present an outline of the proposed study and answer any questions you may have at the first available Committee meeting.

Yours faithfully
Sylvia Bolton (Mrs)

Lorna Blackburn (Madam Chair) confirmed by telephone (13 June 1998) that the Committee had agreed access to the membership. I arranged to include a letter with the next scheduled postal communication to members in mid-July.

I suspected that the letter (Figure 4.2) needed to promote my parental interest in dyspraxia, but that it still needed a professional edge if I was to gain the trust and confidence of the parents. I hoped that my position as educational advisor would provide some credence, and mask the inadequacies that I felt within myself as to my ability to carry out the study

One hundred and fifty-two letters were posted on 16 July 1998. I spent ten anxious days before the first reply (Patricia by telephone). In all I received 34 replies (24 in direct response and 10 third parties who had been passed the letter by a member or a teacher). Of these, seven children were of the required age and transferring in September 2000. Five sets of parents agreed to participate in the final study (Page 34). The negotiated terms and conditions of participation are set out in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.2: Letter to the Membership of the Dyspraxia Foundation

Home Address

16 July 1998

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am the parent of a fifteen-year-old boy who has dyspraxia and I am looking for help with a research study into the transfer of children with dyspraxia from primary to secondary school in Northern Ireland. The study will focus on the family's perspective of the transfer procedure and aims to tell the story of what it is like to live with dyspraxia. When complete the results will be presented as a thesis for examination for a Doctorate in Education with the Open University.

If you have a child who will be entering P6 in 1998 and transferring to secondary school in September 2000, and are interested in taking part, or would simply like more information please contact me as detailed overleaf. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence. Before you make any commitment, I shall arrange to meet with you to discuss issues such as the nature of the study and what will be required of you. I shall also confirm my commitment to you with regards to confidentiality and the use of any information that you provide at interview or otherwise. Examples of my previous work, character references and details of the Open University department supervising my work are available on request,

Yours faithfully

Sylvia D Bolton MA (Ed)

Educational Advisor, Dyspraxia Foundation (NI)

Figure 4.3: Information Sheet for Parents

Participant Information

Prepared July 2000

Thank-you for giving consideration to participating in this educational research study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before making any decision. If you are unclear about anything written here, or have a question that is not addressed please ask. In drawing up this information I have referred to the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines (1992).

Aims and Purpose of the Research

1. The study aims to document the experiences of the parents of five unrelated children (with dyspraxia) in the period leading up to and including the transfer to secondary school.
2. I am interested in what is important to you at this time, and make it clear that there are no right or wrong answers.
3. The purpose is to tell the parent/family side of what is happening, and to make this available to professionals in education and the wider public through publication.
4. The completed study will be presented as a thesis for examination by the Open University for the award of Doctor of Education in September 2001.

Publication

1. Publications will be in my name.
2. You have the right to choose anonymity in any/all publications and to choose an alternative name.
3. At all times I shall endeavour to protect your confidentiality, but you should be aware that circumstances might arise where this may not be achievable.

continued

Figure 4.3: Information Sheet for Parents continued

Your Commitment to the Study

1. The study requires that participants are available for interview (maximum 6) during the period September 1998 to September 2000. However you have the right to withdraw at any time.
2. Interviews will take the form of conversations and will be held at a mutually agreeable time and place at intervals determined by the Transfer Calendar* (copy attached). You have the right to terminate any interview at any time.

My Commitment to You

1. I shall endeavour at all times to respect your confidentiality and to represent your words honestly.
2. Any data stored on computer will be password protected and a copy made available to you on request.
3. A copy of interview notes and transcripts will be posted to you for comment within 48 hours of each interview. You are free to comment on anything that you disagree with or are unhappy with.
4. If there is anything relating to the study that you wish to discuss you may contact me at my home telephone number.

Storage and Use of Material on Completion of the Study

1. All data from the study will be filed and securely stored at my home.
2. A copy of all data held relating to you will be offered to you on completion of the study.
3. You will be offered a copy of the completed thesis.
4. Unless we negotiate to the contrary, I retain the right to draw on the data for future publications.
5. Unless you inform me to the contrary, instructions will be left with my next of kin for the destruction of the stored data on my demise.

* See Figure 1.1: The Transfer Calendar 1999/2000

Monday 27th July 1998

Patricia rang just after 9 a.m. My letter (Figure 4.2) had been waiting when she had returned from holiday in Majorca on the previous Friday. She had wanted to phone then, but had waited until work hours. I was concerned that she had formed a 'professional' as opposed to a 'parental' image of me, and so I emphasised that I was doing the research as a parent.

Patricia: *"Don't worry. I know we're on the same side."*

I accentuated that I would meet with her and/or her husband at a mutually agreeable time and place of her choosing. We settled on 10 a.m. on the following Thursday. I explained that this introductory meeting should take about an hour and that in it I would explain:

- The purpose and duration of the study.
- The demands on participants.
- How the information would be used and stored, now and in the future.
- My commitment to the participants, including confidentiality issues.

I advised that I would bring along examples of my work, and stressed that I did not expect a commitment to the study until she and her family had taken time to reflect and discuss the implications of participation.

Thursday 6th August 1998

It was a lovely morning for a drive along the Antrim coastline. Patricia was waiting for me at her front door. She was carrying a little boy.

Patricia: *"This is Liam. He's my sister's – a wee late one. We're very close. I work nights Geraldine finishes about two. She's on a till, so has to wait for her relief."*

Patricia led me straight into the kitchen. She offered tea and I accepted. While the kettle was boiling she went into another room. My intention was

to tell her a bit about myself. Patricia had other ideas however and when she returned she banged a bundle of papers on to the table.

Patricia: *“If it’s evidence you want. I’ve got plenty of it. We need somebody on our side. I have a list of questions here for that psychologist. I’m sickened with his “It’s up to you Patricia” rubbish and all that psycho stuff. If it was up to me Tiernan wouldn’t be like he is now. He was OK when he started school. Now look at him. Take all that stuff with you and choke them with it.”*

I pulled the pile towards me saying that I would look at the ‘evidence’ shortly, but that first I would like to explain to her about the research (See Figure 4: 3: Information Sheet for Parents).

Patricia:: *“Fire away, but I’m already in there. My boiler’s . . . fired.”*

We went over the information sheet. She asked no questions. I explained that during the interview I would take notes by hand, and that at natural breaks I would recap on what had been said.

I prefer taking notes by hand not least because I find tape recording awkward, but also because I am practised in this method. I understand the argument that tape recording can increase the validity of a study by providing hard evidence. However I am not fully convinced by the assertion that it reduces bias caused by undue emphasis on behaviour (Walker, 1987), as I consider that body language and behaviour are very important aspects of communication. Walker (1987) refers to the writings of MacDonald and Sanger whose work suggests that tape recording and note taking are not just alternative ways of doing the same thing, but rather that in each there is a different relationship set up. I find that in note taking there is a physical involvement with the data from the start – a multi-sensory aspect – which

allows for the interviewee to concentrate on the interviewer. Whereas with recording there is a risk of concentration being deflected to the recording, as the interviewee is aware that all is being taped and may be more guarded in their choice of words.

In the style of Ball (1991) my approach to interviewing was to minimise topic questions and to maximise cue questions. I realised that this might encourage rambling, but felt that this concern was outweighed by the control that this approach afforded the participants.

Patricia: *“Right, let’s get down to brass tacks. I’ve got so much to get off my chest. They’ve now decided to statement Tiernan. The psycho’s side-kick was here one Tuesday morning. She’s a nice enough woman. Only doin’ her job. The psychologist’s the one to get my son educated There’s nothin’ they can do without him. Saw him in May. He’s a buck passer, a buck passer.”*

Patricia related how she had phoned the psychologist in April for an appointment, and how this had been denied. She had then pleaded with his secretary for an appointment.

Patricia: *“Snotty woman, told me that the psycho was too busy just to meet every parent that asked. It’s his job. That’s what he gets paid for. . . . Thought he’d ignore me. Soon learnt, I sent a solicitor’s letter. Ignored the first, but not the second . . . Not that stupid!”*

Sylvia: *“What happened?”*

Patricia: *"The psycho called a meeting in the school."*

Sylvia: *"Who was there?"*

Patricia: *"Me, the LTSS teacher, the head, the deputy, Kieran, the psycho and his side-kick. I was going to take a lady with me. She specialises in special needs and is doing an assessment for me. You need to keep somethin' up your sleeve. I don't tell them everything. The SENCO wasn't there. She was taking sports day. Snubbed my Tiernan she did. Snubbed him."*

Sylvia: *"How did it go?"*

Patricia: *"Didn't go or get anywhere. The psycho came down knowing he was goin' to offer nothin'. If he'd had something he would just have lifted the phone. I know how boys like him operate. After the meeting [the head-teacher] he told me that I'd come across very well. Just tryin' to sweeten me. I know they'd been discussing me and that he was in on it. They were ten minutes in his office before they let us in. Like to keep things to themselves, but no chance now I've a solicitor."*

At this point she pulled the pile of papers towards her. She picked out a psychology report.

Patricia: *"Listen to this. "Concerns over core subjects. Individual help on withdrawal for literacy and written work." Lot of good that when he can't hold a pen. "Pleasant and co-operative, Effort and concentration – good. No outward signs of a problem." A blind man could see he has a problem. Dr [school medical officer] - her report says that he's clumsy and walks funny. [laughs] He's all over the show. "Verbal IQ – average 95 – 104 Performance IQ – poor. Difficulties with organisation." The psycho says not to let the child see or the child hear what's happening. Otherwise he'll have no interest left. They've neglected my son."*

She returned to talk about the meeting.

Patricia: *"Ten minutes we sat there while **they** talked about **us**. I'm happy it was their meeting, but they should have asked us in. Didn't even offer us a cup of tea. . . and I saw theirs goin' in on a wee tray. They're just ignorant. Especially that psycho. He drove it the way he wanted. Quoted a lot of statistics so we couldn't understand. I don't know why he didn't talk 'talk' instead of statistics. I wanted to talk about **my** son. He said it was all down to money and waitin' lists. I'd like to get him by the neck. As my husband says, "You don't go in with your gun in your holster, you go in to kill. Buck passers that's all they are, buck passers."*

Her husband, Kieran was at work.

Patricia: *"Kiernan's not dealing with the stress at all.
... I was off work myself for three weeks ...
but I've got to be the strong one."*

She remembered about a letter that she had received after the school meeting in May and searched frantically through the papers until she found it.

Patricia: *"Just wait to you hear this. I wish I could get that man by the throat. Here it is. "Mr and Mrs O'Hare mentioned at our meeting today that they had been receiving advice on Tiernan from their own expert. I advised them that it would be very important for any information that the advisor might give should be shared with other professionals so that proper account can be taken of it as his special needs are addressed." Want to know everything and tell nothin'. I know their sort. They know too much, I'm keepin' the advisor up my sleeve. It's me versus them. They're two faced. It's a battle. Me versus them. The more people hears the better."*

Gradually the conversation turned to the transfer to secondary school. Patricia made it clear that she considered that the transfer and the provision of Tiernan's special educational needs were separate and distinct.

Patricia: *"Tiernan's not remedial or anything. He's not slow like the wee boy up the street. He*

goes to the slow school. Tiernan's just awkward. He's got it upstairs. Any school should take him. Mrs [] who was here on Tuesday says that Tiernan will go through the Code instead of a Statement. That's 'cos he's got it upstairs."

Sylvia: *"How does this work with his transfer?"*

Patricia: *"Nothin' to do with it. Maybe our schools are different there. It's only if you don't have it upstairs. He's not remedial, definitely not. He has a problem, but he wasn't born with it. He's been neglected. It's hard to get out of a remedial class, but he's not remedial, definitely not."*

We talked until almost one o'clock. By then her mother had long returned with *'mince for the dinner'* and we had moved into the living room. I was very aware that Patricia had not had her *'wee sleep'* and suggested a few times that I could leave and could come back later. Patricia was adamant that I stayed and had a *'bite of dinner'* adding that *'she would be offended if I didn't'*. Ever appreciative of food I accepted, and for the record it was tasty.

When writing up my notes that evening I realised just how much of an 'insider' I was. Somehow the neatly thought out benefits of being an 'insider' or an 'outsider' (Pages 96 - 97) seemed superfluous when I was saturated with being an 'insider'. As I recounted on page 95 my first reaction to some of Patricia's observations were ones of disbelief at her ignorance of the psychologist's role. Now as my past crashed into my present I recalled my own threats of camping out on the steps of the entrance to the building that housed the principal psychologist's office in

Her husband, Kieran was at work.

Patricia: *“Kiernan’s not dealing with the stress at all.
. . . I was off work myself for three weeks . . .
but I’ve got to be the strong one.”*

She remembered about a letter that she had received after the school meeting in May and searched frantically through the papers until she found it.

Patricia: *“Just wait to you hear this. I wish I could get that man by the throat. Here it is. “Mr and Mrs O’Hare mentioned at our meeting today that they had been receiving advice on Tiernan from their own expert. I advised them that it would be very important for any information that the advisor might give should be shared with other professionals so that proper account can be taken of it as his special needs are addressed.” Want to know everything and tell nothin’. I know their sort. They know too much, I’m keepin’ the advisor up my sleeve. It’s me versus them. They’re two faced. It’s a battle. Me versus them. The more people hears the better.”*

Gradually the conversation turned to the transfer to secondary school. Patricia made it clear that she considered that the transfer and the provision of Tiernan’s special educational needs were separate and distinct.

Patricia: *“Tiernan’s not remedial or anything. He’s not slow like the wee boy up the street. He*

goes to the slow school. Tiernan's just awkward. He's got it upstairs. Any school should take him. Mrs [] who was here on Tuesday says that Tiernan will go through the Code instead of a Statement. That's 'cos he's got it upstairs."

Sylvia: *"How does this work with his transfer?"*

Patricia: *"Nothin' to do with it. Maybe our schools are different there. It's only if you don't have it upstairs. He's not remedial, definitely not. He has a problem, but he wasn't born with it. He's been neglected. It's hard to get out of a remedial class, but he's not remedial, definitely not."*

We talked until almost one o'clock. By then her mother had long returned with *'mince for the dinner'* and we had moved into the living room. I was very aware that Patricia had not had her *'wee sleep'* and suggested a few times that I could leave and could come back later. Patricia was adamant that I stayed and had a *'bite of dinner'* adding that *'she would be offended if I didn't'*. Ever appreciative of food I accepted, and for the record it was tasty.

When writing up my notes that evening I realised just how much of an *'insider'* I was. Somehow the neatly thought out benefits of being an *'insider'* or an *'outsider'* (Pages 96 - 97) seemed superfluous when I was saturated with being an *'insider'*. As I recounted on page 95 my first reaction to some of Patricia's observations were ones of disbelief at her ignorance of the psychologist's role. Now as my past crashed into my present I recalled my own threats of camping out on the steps of the entrance to the building that housed the principal psychologist's office in

County Hall, Ballymena. I wondered if Patricia was turning over in her head, or talking to her husband about what we had talked about that morning. I remembered a time when like Patricia I too had wanted to talk to anyone who would listen, anyone who appeared to understand. I worried that perhaps Patricia had talked more than she had intended. I reasoned that she was an adult and could decide for herself how much or how little she wanted to tell. Yet there was still an onus on me to ensure that I had not overstepped the mark and pressurised her into saying more than she had intended (Ball, 1991). I thought that perhaps this was one of the advantages of tape recording. With a tape I could have listened again to what I had said. My thoughts wandered to wondering why Patricia wanted to take part in the research. Her language spoke of anger with phrases such as “*get him by the neck*”, “*you go in to kill*” and “*It’s a battle*”, and distrust with phrases such as “*want to know everything and tell nothin’*” and “*just tryin’ to sweeten me*”. Later I was to link this with my readings of Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari (Chapter 6), but then I was simply bathing in the data. I wondered if she wanted to have me “*up her sleeve*”, just like the special needs advisor that she had spoken about. Furthermore, I was uneasy that I might have caused Patricia to recall painful memories (Page 99), and yet I was conscious that this was always part of the risk of the research. I reflected on when I too had insisted that Graeme was not remedial. I wondered what would have happened if I had not been a fighter like Patricia. Would Graeme have become a ‘remedial’? I questioned what becoming ‘remedial’ meant. My head was spinning in a chaos of thoughts. Later I wondered if what I had experienced was the ‘naturalistic generalisation’ that I had read about in Robert Stake’s (1995) book, *The Art of Case Study*. Back in my study I opened Stake (1995, p. 85) and read:

“People learn by receiving generalizations People also form generalization from their experience. . . . Naturalistic generalizations are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person

feels as if it happened to themselves. It is not clear that generalizations arrived at in two quite separate ways are kept apart in any way in the mind. One set of generalizations through two doors."

I was excited at my discovery. Yet, there was no one to tell. Was this the feeling of isolation that lone researchers talked about?

As I familiarised myself with the transcribed interview notes, I realised that initial analysis had begun. Reading the notes I was surprised by how much information had passed by unnoticed during the actual interview. Based on Strauss & Lehtinen (1987) I devised a practical procedure whereby I labelled the interview data by highlighting interesting portions and making short notes in the margin. In this way :

"[pattern] ideas are kept track of, and continuously linked and built up by means of [pattern] memos. From time to time they are taken out of the file and examined and sorted, which result in new ideas, thus new memos."

Strauss & Lehtinen (1987, p.18)

(Appendix 4.1 provides an example of interview notes and analysis)

This period of reflection pulled me up to the realisation, that despite my researcher's rhetoric of not coming as an evaluator or reformer, and not judging or becoming involved, I **was** judging these parents by measuring their words against my understanding and experience. For instance, when I reacted to Patricia's observations with disbelief (Page 95). In so doing, I revealed my subjectivity. Peshkin (1988) cites that subjectivity is consciously and subconsciously insistently present in both the research and non-research aspects of our lives. Like Peshkin (1988) I sought ways in which I could identify and manage my subjectivity, so that I could reap value from its presence. However, first I had to identify when my

subjectivity was engaged. Like Peshkin I monitored this by the emergence of negative or positive feelings in response to data. I recorded such feelings and reactions in my research diary (Page 98). I am aware that there are subjectivities that my crude 'emotional response' barometer failed to detect, such as those of my deeply held cultural beliefs (Page 29). However, the consciousness that there exists, that which I am disposed to see and that which I am disposed not to see (Page 94), provided a means by which I might *"escape the thwarting biases that subjectivity engenders, while attaining the singular perspective its special persuasions promise"* (Peshkin, 1988, p.21).

Over the next weeks I arranged interviews with each family and after each interview I withdrew to consider the data. Pattern ideas waxed and waned as I tested emerging forms against secondary sources, and through reflection came to appreciate the different interpretations placed on the familiar by the parents. This process of progressive focusing allowed for change and thus facilitated the grounding of the data in the everyday circumstances of the parents.

I was aware from an early stage of the similarity of the composition of the participating families, which appeared to almost fit the stereotypical notion of 'the traditional family', that is, two married parents of the opposite sex, with two children, who rely on the father's income as the main source of wealth (Carpenter, 2000). This concerned me, as life experience supported by literature readings (Bastiani & Wolfendale, 1996, Carpenter, 2000, Roll, 1991) suggested that, even allowing for regional variations, this was not the reality in UK society today. David (1994) documents the changing gender roles in society that have influenced the move away from the patriarchal model of the family, which was a feature of modern life at the beginning of the twentieth century, towards the diversity of family forms (Carpenter, 2000) evident today, and Winton (1990) writes:

"Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents and grandparents. We live under one roof or many. A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever. We become part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a desire for mutual support. A family is a culture unto itself, with different values and unique ways of realising its dreams."

(p. 4)

The family remains very much the major structure in which children are reared (Carpenter, 2000), as it is 'forms' rather than 'functions' of families that have changed (Dahlstrom, 1989). I consider that the participating families are as valid a sample of this diversity as any other. However, I acknowledge those factors such as the make-up of the Dyspraxia Foundation membership and the willingness or unwillingness of individuals to take part in research, which will have influenced the constitution of the study sample.

Like Griffin (1985):

"I had little difficulty talking to [mothers] (usually in the kitchen, which was very much a female space), but the . . . fathers proved to be the most elusive and unforthcoming."

(p. 98)

At first, I gave little mind to this presenting imbalance between mothers and fathers, but gradually I was awakened to the cultural prejudice that guided my complacency. I realised that I was accepting without question the gendered nature of parenting in the UK (MacLachlan, 1996). I was particularly concerned that I was accepting the mother's opinion as that of both parents, whereas in reality each parent is an individual with his/her own right, and with her/his unique strengths and capabilities (Dunst et al,

1988). I found no easy way to resolve my dilemma, as each solution led to more unanswered questions. For instance, if I restricted the study to mothers only, was I discriminating against fathers like William (Page 36) who took an active part in the traditional 'mothering' role? An easing of this quandary came in June 2000, when the other four fathers of their own volition began to take an active interest in the study (Page 158). This action, supported by my reading of Dunst et al (1988) led me to an acceptance of the family as a unit composed of interdependent members, who take on different roles at different times. Thus for the purposes of this study, I acknowledge that it is the right of the family to decide who speaks on behalf of the parental unit, and that it is not my role as researcher to impose on or manipulate their reality.

Change of Study Title

This initial interview period allowed for a developing of relationships and a refinement of my interview skills. It also brought an awareness that the issues that the families wanted to talk about were not necessarily about the mechanics of the transfer process. William (November 1998) for instance, made it clear that his interest lay in Laura's happiness:

"Laura's coming on well and is reasonably happy at school. I just want her to be happy. . . . I don't care what she can or cannot do at school. I just want her to be happy . . . She's my little princess they think she's a frog, but she's not."

And Margarite (February 1999) spoke of the transfer as though it was inevitable but surmountable:

"I'm his Mummy and that's what I'm here for. He has to move school and we'll get through it. I worry about what's going to happen to him . . . my poor wee love. But there's more than what's inside school I'll see to that."

To some extent this lack of focus on the transfer surprised me, and yet on reflection I realised that all I had ever wanted for Graeme was for him to be happy; schooling was a part of life but not all life. This thinking process was influenced by my reading at this time of Alexander (1996) who notes that:

“Children are in school for only a short period of waking time between birth and the age of sixteen – less than 15%. Yet educational provision is planned as if it alone were the source of all knowledge.”

(p.19)

This was tempered by my understanding that educational qualifications are the principal determinant of job opportunities and of vital importance in determining long-term life chances (Abercrombie & Warde, 1997). The younger generation today are better qualified than thirty years ago (Page 43), and whilst this may widen opportunities for some it also closes doors for others, as employers raise the academic requirements for job applicants to match the available pool. Valerie acknowledged this in the quote on page 64 where she intimated that in today’s climate she would not have been able to become a nurse. Like Margarite I too worried about what was going to happen to Graeme. Sometimes I visualised him in sheltered work - packing boxes or covering stools. This was not what I wanted for my son. I *“wanted him to have an ordinary life. Not much to ask for, an ordinary life – but it can seem as distant as the moon* (A mother quoted in Mental Health Foundation Report, 1997, p. 16) when your child is not meeting the expected norms. However, as Valerie (September 1998) intimates in the following quote, I found that *“[j]ust occasionally there is a tantalising glimpse of the son that might have been”* Bowdery (1997, p. 6):

“Nathan’s a funny child. He has two flat feet and he’s clumsy. He can’t use a knife and fork, but he’s great on the piano. His piano teacher’s always at him about the

*way he sits and the way he holds his hands, but he's good.
He loves it."*

I came to an understanding that that these parents were trying to manage life events and family relationships effectively (Dunst et al. 1994) and that the transfer was just another life event that affected family relationships. Somehow it now seemed arrogant that I could ever have assumed that these parents should be focused on schooling, simply because I had come along with my research study based in the School of Education of the Open University.

Maslow (1954) placed needs in a hierarchy, and argued that unmet basic needs dominate behaviour and interfere with achievement of higher level needs. Because of this, emphasis is most likely to be placed on unmet needs, that is, those that are personally most important. When needs are not met, this acts as a powerful force *"that presses the family to invest physical time and energy to meet these needs"* (Dunst et al, 1988, p.17). Patricia exemplifies this with her language that is littered with the metaphors of war. She is battling for what to her are the most important needs of this time, and it is these which guide her behaviour and consume her energy.

I realised that the study title at proposal did not adequately meet with the issues emerging through progressive focusing, and in February 1999 I changed the study title to:

WHEN DYSPRAXIA MEETS SELECTION AT 11+

CHAPTER FIVE

The Experience of the Transfer

The organisation of this chapter caused much concern. My initial plan was to present each journey through the transfer as a discrete case. However, in practice I found this an artificial portrayal of my research experience, which was ongoing and eclectic as opposed to discrete and linear. My compromise is to present a chronological journey, interwoven with discussion of the issues arrived at by progressive focusing. Editing was an essential part of this process, with selection guided by the research question (Page 71). I am ever conscious of the bias that editing introduces (Page 29) and the imbalance of space within the text given over to each participant that this realises. I also acknowledge that there are issues buried within the quotes, and additional to those discussed, that are worthy of unravelling. My consolation is the understanding that these shortcomings may be redressed to some extent by future publications.

The Transfer Calendar 1999/2000 is set out in Figure 1.1 on page 49.

May – June 1999: Parent Information Evenings

Transfer information evenings form part of the Transfer Procedure, and are held in primary schools in the summer term of Year 6. Their purpose is to inform parents of the procedures and steps of the Transfer Calendar.

25 May 1999

I arrived at The Manse just after eleven, and parked beneath one of the five huge spreading chestnut trees that surround the house. Joan and William came out to meet me. William explained that he could only stay until

quarter to twelve as he had a funeral service to conduct. After the initial pleasantries I inquired about the recently held transfer information evening. Laura is statemented and so outside this process (Page 47).

William: *"We both went. It was nice to be included, but it wasn't for us. . . . Joan found it upsetting. So did I. It's at times like this that I wonder if we did the right thing pressing for a statement. Without it there'd be no classroom assistant, but it makes her really different now."*

Joan interrupts:

"Well, I knew what to expect from my years of teaching but it wasn't to do with Laura. She's the only statemented child in the school, so it's hard for them. . . . At home Laura's just Laura. . . . but meetings like that just bring it home that she's different . . . It would be easier if she was just 'slow'. Then we'd still be part of it. As it is, the slow ones look down on Laura."

I asked what she meant by this. William answered:

"It's when other parents ask if Laura's sitting the tests. It would be easier to say that we've decided to opt out. Mention that she'll be doing psychological tests and that's the end of the conversation. Seems as though only the badly behaved or the stupid see the psychologist."

Joan: *"I just don't bother to explain any more. I just say she's not doing it. It's the truth, but I still feel disloyal to Laura. It's as though I'm embarrassed for her . . . but I'm not, it's just easier. I just want to be treated like normal."*

Sylvia: *"How do you mean?"*

Joan: *"Oh . . . I don't really know. . . . I'd like to talk about Laura . . . sort of normal things that you talk about outside the school. How she dropped her bowl of cornflakes this morning and forgot her towel on swimming day. The sort of things Iain does too. But I can't because they don't know what to say. They talk 'around' Laura. It's hard to explain . . . sort of avoid talking about Laura, apart from her age or where we're going on holiday. . . . They're nice people. I think they're just embarrassed, but it hurts all the same."*

At this time I was reading *Parent-Teacher Partnership: Practical Approaches to Meeting Special Educational Needs* (Blamires et al, 1997).

On page 19 they write:

" [Others] may not know how to broach the subject of a child who is different, or how much to talk about problems that they have with their 'ordinary' children without seeming to be insensitive. This ultra-sensitivity may lead to more feelings of isolation for the parents of the disabled child ."

Joan: *"I just don't bother to explain any more. I just say she's not doing it. It's the truth, but I still feel disloyal to Laura. It's as though I'm embarrassed for her . . . but I'm not, it's just easier. I just want to be treated like normal."*

Sylvia: *"How do you mean?"*

Joan: *"Oh . . . I don't really know. . . . I'd like to talk about Laura . . . sort of normal things that you talk about outside the school. How she dropped her bowl of cornflakes this morning and forgot her towel on swimming day. The sort of things Iain does too. But I can't because they don't know what to say. They talk 'around' Laura. It's hard to explain . . . sort of avoid talking about Laura, apart from her age or where we're going on holiday. . . . They're nice people. I think they're just embarrassed, but it hurts all the same."*

At this time I was reading *Parent-Teacher Partnership: Practical Approaches to Meeting Special Educational Needs* (Blamires et al, 1997).

On page 19 they write:

" [Others] may not know how to broach the subject of a child who is different, or how much to talk about problems that they have with their 'ordinary' children without seeming to be insensitive. This ultra-sensitivity may lead to more feelings of isolation for the parents of the disabled child."

Whilst Joan and William did not use the word 'isolation', their language suggested that they felt left out of the group of 'normal' parents. Joan, for instance, spoke of the feelings of 'embarrassment' that surrounded Laura, and of how other parents avoided talking about her. Unlike other forms of emotion (e.g. fear, joy, despair), embarrassment is said to be a purely human experience, a social phenomenon, which results when our encounters with others go wrong. It occurs particularly when "*an impression an individual is seeking to sustain about his or her identity comes into question*" (Giddens, 1997, p. 20). It is intrinsically a form of shame about the Self (Page 165), which is visible through signs such as blushing, fumbling and avoidance of eye contact. Embarrassment is central to our day-to-day conduct within society and bounds social interaction in areas "*that formal and institutionalised constraints do not reach*" (Heath, 1997, p. 32). It contains an individual's commitment to social organisation, values and convention by providing a personal constraint on individual behaviour. Pivotal to this are the notions of normality on which values are established and attitudes founded (Pages 55 & 171).

Erving Goffman's pioneering work into the interactional organisation of the phenomenon of embarrassment, revealed that it is a moment of mutual gaze giving rise to a shared recognition which generates discomfort. It is that moment when 'someone catches you looking at them', and you feel guilt at the thought of your previous thoughts about them even though the person could not have accessed these thoughts. It is the moment when you remark to a friend on how daft an outfit pictured in a magazine looks, only to recall that she has one just like it. Embarrassment is fuelled by discomfort and as Heath (1997, p.38) describes:

"thrives on one person seeing another see the first, and so on; the reflexive recognition kindling further fires of discomfort."

Embarrassment results when conversation or action threatens to devalue the assumptions that are projected by an individual about his/her identity (Goffman, 1963). Ferguson et al (1992) argue that individuals with disabilities are seen as 'normal' by his/her intimate family members. This is exemplified by Joan when she says, "*At home Laura's just Laura*" (Page 126) and Valerie when she says that Nathan was "*just him*" (Page 59). The identity that Joan chooses to assume for Laura and project outside school is that of the intimate family 'normal'; a non-special needs identity. Her desire is to talk about the "*sort of normal things that you talk about outside school*" (Page 127), such as how Laura "*dropped her bowl of cornflakes*" or "*forgot her towel on swimming day*" (Joan, June 1999). However, Laura also has a special needs identity, which is visible to other parents by, for example, the provision of a classroom assistant. The findings of Gorard (1997) and DENI (1998a) suggest that in the state sector, both parents and teachers place emphasis on the term 'special needs' as meaning 'low ability', with little regard for children of average and above ability who require additional support. In this climate, the special needs identity has the potential to put a different spin on everyday happenings, allowing for a situation in which Laura's actions become attributed to her special needs. So, for instance, dropping the bowl of cornflakes becomes a confirmation of her clumsiness, and forgetting her towel, evidence of her lack of personal organisation, as opposed to examples of human experience. Thus, whilst Joan desires to adopt a non-special needs identity for Laura when speaking to parents outside school, it is the moment of mutual gaze on the special needs identity which holds the potential to devalue Joan's assumed identity. This causes embarrassment because the other parent feels sensitive about having an ordinary/normal child.

The participants also practise the imposing of deviant identities on non-intimates. Joan, for example, refers to the "*slow ones*" in the class, and Patricia distances Nathan from "*the wee boy up the street*" who "*goes to the slow school*" (Page 116). Valerie also talks about "*the wee slow boy from up the road*" (Page 138) and, likewise, I voiced concerns about Graeme

becoming a remedial (Page 118). This devaluation of the slow-learner harks back to the work of Cyril Burt who set up the first psychological service in the UK. One of his first tasks was to discover the commonest and most influential causes of backwardness (Corbett, 1996). Using the then relatively new tests of mental age (IQ) and educational ability (Corbett, 1998) he differentiated between “*the innately dull*” and those whose “*backwardness was accidental or acquired*” (Burt, 1937, p.606). Burt (1952, p. 37, quoted in Corbett, 1996, p. 19) writes that:

“The definitely normal merge through the border-line cases into the definitely sub-normal, much as daylight merges through twilight into night.”

And goes on to admit that the definition of backwardness “*must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary, based on practical experience or convention, like the hour fixed for lighting up*” (ibid.). This nebulous definition of backwardness transferred readily from ‘educational subnormality’ through to ‘slow-learners’ and ‘moderate learning difficulties’, leaving in its wake an imagery of special needs in which:

“Normality is flooded with light (symbolizing righteousness and clarity) whilst those souls on the borderline slip towards darkness (symbolizing evil and confusion).”

(Corbett, 1996, p.20)

Goffman (1969) suggests that distancing from devalued groups may indicate the degree with which individuals identify with the notion of normal, and Low (1996) further suggests that our greatest desire is to be treated as normal. Prior to the start of the Transfer Calendar, Joan placed Laura below normal (Page 60), but above the “*slow ones*” (Page 126), but now she considers the “*slow ones*” ‘normal’ in terms of the Transfer Process, and sees them as looking down on Laura. In contrast, Nathan is not

statemented and takes part in the Transfer Process and Valerie's view of the position of the "*slow ones*" in the class hierarchy remains unchanged. Nathan is one of "*the stars*", the group of children whose parents have chosen to opt them out of the Transfer Tests (Pages 91 - 92). Within "*the stars*" the hierarchies of esteem are unaltered, with the "*slow ones*" retaining their lower position in the pecking order (The Open University, 1992c). The Transfer Process excludes the child with a statement, and this fragmentation causes problems for pupils, parents, teachers and support staff "*who cannot deal with the 'whole' experience of pupils because they are categorised as [statemented]*" (Kelly, 1991, p. 17). This categorisation does not fit comfortably with the spirit of the Code of Practice (1998) because the 1986 Education (NI) Order was modelled on the 1981 Education Act (England & Wales), which was styled more to meet a comprehensive system than the selective system in place in Northern Ireland (Chapter 1).

Parents who see their child as part of a devalued group have to explain the social position they find themselves in not only to others but also to themselves. Otherwise they risk losing face and their sense of self-worth, through negative damage to their positive image in the eyes of those they value (The Open University, 1992c). Prior to the transfer, one of the strategies used by Joan was to devalue the '*slow ones*', but now with their perceived elevation within the school hierarchy she was faced with adopting a different strategy. She demonstrated this later in the interview when she put a positive spin on her position by placing responsibility for school performance beyond Laura's control, and accentuating her achievement despite of this:

"It's not as though Laura can help the way she is. She was born with special needs. It's taken her a lot more effort to get where she is now than some of those who will get an A."

As I listened to Joan, I heard echoes of myself. Despite my understanding that special needs is a term created by professionals (Corbett, 1993), I too, in everyday conversation have referred to Graeme as having been born with special needs. This colloquial as opposed to professional use of the term hints at how in our daily lives the language of education has taken on the guise of the natural (Page 171), and how, as I discuss in Chapter 6, the space of the anatomical body is given over to a political surface – the Self (Fox, 1993) or the Body-without-Organs (BwO) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).

Later when transcribing the interview, my thoughts turned to Patricia, who in contrast to Joan, explains Tiernan's performance and social position in school, in terms of neglect by his educators:

"Tiernan was a lovely wee child. Not a bit of bother. Nothin' wrong with him. No sooner in school and it was he can't do this and he can't do that. I'd no bother . . . so what does that tell you? . . . They neglected him and now he's behind."

(Patricia, June 1999)

My interview notes record that, in total, during our interviews Patricia used the term 'neglect' with reference to Tiernan's educators fifty-nine times. In separated interviews she related, almost word for word, her conviction of this alleged neglect. Measor (The Open University, 1994) refers to the use of such repetition by interviewees during her work for *Teacher Careers* (Sikes et al. 1985) (Page 101 - 102) and suggests that it is a means of bestowing special status; a signifying that an incident or happening is outside of the ordinary. At the theoretical level it is a means to put shape and understanding into lived experiences. Bauman (1997) describes how to make sense of life events we draw on the tools of explanation from within our respective life-worlds. He notes how:

"We would find it difficult to accept that a situation was not an effect of intentional action of an identifiable 'somebody'; and we would not lightly give up our conviction that any unwelcome condition could be remedied if only someone, somewhere wished to take the right action."

(p. 16)

Patricia accepts that Tiernan is falling behind his peers at school. However, she recalls Tiernan as a 'normal' baby and child, with no identified or suspected problems before starting school (Pages 63 & 112), and describes her first intimation that anything was wrong as happening when Tiernan was six years old:

"First I knew was a letter from Father []. I thought Tiernan was in bother for spitting again But no, it was Dear Mr & Mrs O'Hare, Tiernan needs work on his words. Tiernan talked no bother . . . some funny words . . just the usual. He was OK until they got their hands on him. . . I made sure the speech therapist knew it was their fault. They neglected him."

(August 1998)

The start of school is the juncture that Patricia equates with the change in Tiernan, and so it is within the school that she looks for someone to blame. She identifies not an individual, but rather the group that makes up 'his educators'. Within this group, as I noted on page 95, she perceives the psychologist as "*the big shot*" and "*the one to get [her] son educated*", and it is he who could remedy her situation, if only he had a mind to.

As I drew attention to on page 118, Patricia's language is littered with the metaphors of war and fighting. Blamires et al (1997, p. 32) chronicle how

Gasgoigne (1995) categorises parents by type and describes 'fighting' parents as:

"More interested in the fight than the result, seem to take delight pursuing the argument and scoring points and lose sight of the immediate goals of their child."

Like Blamires et al (1997) I consider such description a negative trend in the development of parent-professional partnership, as it places the parent at risk of becoming stereotyped by the label and his/her individuality overtaken by the perceived wisdom attributed to the notion of the 'fighting' parent. Indeed, despite the differences in the language used and the emotions displayed by Patricia and Joan, I sensed that each, within the dictates of her unique personal world-view, was 'fighting' to meet the immediate goals of her child (Bauman, 1997). Each has found someone to blame for the position she finds herself in, and as each is satisfied with the focus of blame, on this front their enquiry is complete (Bauman, 1997). However, in identifying the psychologist as the one who can remedy her situation, Patricia has a target on which to direct her resistance, and so her struggle is visible. On the other hand, Joan by identifying the problem as intrinsic to Laura, does not have a target on which she can direct her resistance. As I discuss in Chapter 6, her 'fight' for Laura is silenced and rendered invisible to non-intimates, by the workings of the disciplinary society of which she is part. Only her conformity is visible.

29 June, 1999

William phoned at 9.30 a.m. He had just received postal notification that Laura would sit her psychological tests on 5th November, the date of the first Transfer Test. William expressed his concern at the unfairness of the psychometric tests and questioned how the children doing the Transfer Tests were allowed to practice and review past papers, yet Laura would have to sit an unknown:

"It's so unfair. I phoned the psychologist, but she says that the tests are special and only unfair if you know what to expect. Now that's what I call psychobabble. Joan and I are going on a three-month exchange to Australia. We leave next Thursday. Laura's Granny was to look after Laura and Iain. I've just booked a ticket for Laura. It'll be an education seeing Australia. There's nothing to miss here."

The idea that the *"tests are special"* suggests that the use of such tests requires expert knowledge, which parents and teachers generally are considered not to have. This notion of expertise empowers psychologists to decide which test to use and when, and to interpret the results in a manner that will help other professionals to formulate their opinion on future placement and provision. This harks back to the legacy inherited by special education from the *"pathology of difference"* (Clough, 2000, p. 11) of medical enquiry, with its focus on sickness, aetiology, subject-specific pathology, specific treatment and reactive measures. In Northern Ireland the medical profession was at the height of its power in education at the introduction of the 1947 Education Act (Page 43). Then even categories that were not strictly medical were given quasi-medical labels (e.g. maladjustment) and normative testing of intelligence and projective testing of personality determined other categories. In the 1970s there was a significant increase in the training and use of psychologists, and both they and administrators gained influence in special education (Tomlinson, 1982). This resulted in a shift of focus from the clinic to the school, and the complementary growth of the remedial services (Page 45). The 1986 and 1987 Education Orders brought an end to the dominance of the medical profession in special education. However, whilst a change of terminology shifted the emphasis from a medical discourse to an educational one, management and assessment held to the structure of medical practice and the spirit of the medical model was retained.

At the heart of the medical model approach to learning difficulties is the view that the individual child is somehow deficient (Clough, 2000). In this model, just as Dr Morris described Mary's story as that of an elbow (Page 17), Laura's story becomes that of her learning difficulty, and just as Mary's medical tests paid no mind to her daily activities, the psychological tests take no account of the curriculum. If Laura was not statemented her parents could choose to opt her out of the Transfer Tests, and then like Nathan she would transfer to mainstream secondary school as part of the Transfer Procedure. As it is, she is set apart from her peers and must sit psychological tests so that she can transfer to a similar school placement. I note here that all statemented children are excluded from sitting the Transfer Tests, and that psychological testing is the gateway to a grammar school place for statemented children. Unlike the Transfer Tests there is no option to opt out of the psychological tests. (See 'William's Musings' on page 145.

July – August 1999

The summer holiday period for schools in Northern Ireland covers the months of July and August. This allowed a welcome oasis for reflection and analysis. Patterns emerging from the data showed that, apart from William, fathers were only marginally involved in the study. I reasoned that this might be accounted for by his life-pattern, which as a Presbyterian minister, might allow for a greater flexibility of time than that of the other fathers who worked nine to five. However, a review of the interviews held at weekends and evenings showed no significant change in pattern. Even if present at the start of the interview, fathers tended to wander off mid-interview to *"put petrol in the car"*, *"get on with cutting the grass"* or *"take the dog for a walk"*. William did not always stay for the full interview either. Once, as noted on page 126 he left to conduct a funeral service, and twice to complete paperwork in his study. Analysis of interview periods which included fathers, revealed their importance as an opportunity to gain a sense of the degree of agreement between partners regarding, for instance, perceptions of their child, descriptions of family life and considerations of the transfer from primary to secondary school (Chesson et al, 1990). In joint

interviews issues raised appeared to be explored to a greater depth and with greater detail, as some issues and points were contested by the other partner. The partner's presence appeared to promote reflection and self-analysis, and allowed for a touching on sensitive issues that might otherwise not have been raised, such as when Peter talked about Nicholas's birth (Page 62). One-parent interviews produced different but no less valuable data, particularly as these allowed space for parents to talk about issues that they would prefer not to raise or discuss in the presence of their partner, such as when Valerie talks about Nathan's bedwetting (Page 141).

September 1999: Parents decide to opt children in or out of the Transfer Tests

Children are only entered for the Tests if parents wish them to be considered for a grammar school place. Parents are requested to give a written statement on whether or not they wish to take the Tests. Statemented children are outside this process.

Chandler (1997, p. 192) writes that despite changing marriage forms and patterns:

"Family ideology continues to link women's identity to hearth and home and to emphasize the importance of their domestic relationships with men and children."

The mothers in the study all managed their lives around their family and, tended to rely on their mothers for additional support (Hastings, 1997). This support was often both practical and emotional (Mirfin-Veitch & Bray, 1997). However, relationships within and across the family were not without stress, as Valerie revealed when we met on 24th September 1999.

24th September 1999

Valerie was washing up after the evening meal when I arrived at 6.30. Roy had gone to play golf straight from work and was not expected home until at least ten o'clock. Valerie explained:

"Roy stays out until Nathan's had his tea and is washed for bed. It's just his way of coping. I say nothing. . . it's easier than rowing. When he's at home it's just one row after the other."

My mind was carried back to when Graeme was younger. Like Roy his Daddy stayed late at work (to avoid the rush hour traffic), and like Valerie I was happy to accept this as it meant fewer arguments. Chesson et al (1990) refer to this phenomenon and link it to their finding that *"everyday living routines had to be arranged to meet the slower needs of the study child"*. In their study, parents singled out the early evening as an *"extremely trying time of day [with] a meal to prepare, homework to supervise and other children to cope with"*(p. 133). Valerie's words endorsed this:

"School nights are a nightmare. It's easier running a ward than getting the boys watered and fed, and the homework done. Nathan's the stickler."

I helped with drying the dishes, and we chatted for a few minutes before I asked if Nathan would be sitting the Transfer Tests:

Valerie: *"Not at all. There's no point. He'd just get a D. It's just a waste of time. There are only four doing the tests and then there's Nathan and the wee slow boy from up the road He was starved of oxygen as a baby. The teacher comes in from the Board for him and Nathan, but Nathan's streets ahead of him."*

He'll go to the secondary. Roy won't hear tell of the integrated . . . so there's only one school . . . not exactly a big choice. That's where I went. It's not bad, but not great either. Some of them are a bit rough. I worry about Nathan getting in with a bad lot."

As the interview progressed, Valerie spoke of her feelings of "being left out because Nathan's the way he is."

Valerie: *"I'm now on oncology and I see people pussyfoot around cancer. They do the same with Nathan."*

Sylvia: *"In what way?"*

Valerie: *"Well, down at the school the other day wee Gary Campbell's father asked me if Nathan was sitting the eleven plus. Didn't give me time to answer. Just said, "Sorry, I forgot that he's . . ." Left it hanging and started to talk about his roof space conversion. As if I care about his extension."*

Sylvia: *"Is it always like this?"*

Valerie: *"Down at the school, you mean?"*

I nodded.

Valerie: *"I don't know . . . I've made friends with mothers through the younger boys, but*

Nathan just pushes people away. . . even my mother. He brings me nothing but loneliness."

Blamires et al (1997) describe the school playground at the beginning and end of the day as:

"a competitive area, a minefield of sensitivities and a very lonely place for a parent of a child with special needs."

(p. 20)

This compares with Valerie's experience in terms of Nathan. However it contrasts with her experiences with regard to his brothers, which match more the rewarding experiences at the school gate described by the parents of non-special needs pupils in a study by MacLachlan (1996).

Later, when transcribing the interview, I reflected on how Valerie's experiences at the school gates were similar to those described by Joan. My thoughts also travelled to Margarite, who in February 1999 had expressed her fears that she was perceived as a bad mother because Nicholas goes to school by taxi:

"Poor wee love has to go to school on his own. The taxi man's there, but it's not the same. . . . I'm sure they talk about me . . . think I'm a bad mother. It's hard when I go to things in school . . . I don't know anybody. They're in a wee clique."

The stereotypical image of the 'good' mother, that pervades our culture, places mothers primarily in the home, and part of this 'motherhood mandate' is the delivering and collecting of children to and from school (MacLachlan, 1996). Whereas, the reality is that many mothers use "*older siblings, other mothers, childminders or school transport for purely*

pragmatic reasons" (MacLachlan, 1996, p. 33). By measuring herself against the stereotype as opposed to the reality, Margerite views herself as falling short of how she would like to be viewed by others, and it is this devalued identity that she has assumed.

As the interview progressed Valerie talked about family relationships, including hers with Nathan:

Valerie: *"I love Nathan, but if he hadn't been first I'm not sure I'd feel the same. He was clingy as a baby and needed a lot of attention. You'd think that would make us closer, but he doesn't give like his brothers. I know he loves me, but it's different. . . . sort of detached."*

Sylvia: *"How's that?"*

Valerie: *"He gets on Roy's nerves. Wasn't so bad as a baby, but now, he just can't stand the way he goes on. He's worried about him. Nathan doesn't help, if he's had a bad day at school he's really hard to work with . . . takes it out on us. Then he pees the bed. Roy doesn't know half the time. He'd just go spare. Mum knows. She takes the sheets and washes them while I'm at work."*

Sylvia: *"My Mum was a great help."*

Valerie: *"Yeah, Mum's very good, but Roy thinks she interferes and pushes him out. He keeps himself out. If it's not work it's golf. She*

finds Nathan hard to take, but she wouldn't stop me working. Knows how hard I had to work to be a nurse"

Valerie's mother provides direct assistance to Valerie by looking after the children when Valerie is at work. Nathan and his brothers also spend Friday evenings and Saturdays at the farm, as well as many hours during the school holidays. Indirectly Valerie's mother also provides financial assistance by releasing Valerie from the costs of childcare (Mirfin-Veitch & Bray, 1997). Interview transcripts reveal that Valerie commented on her appreciation of her mother's support in every interview. However, in each interview she also alluded to the rows that she has with her mother over Nathan's behaviour (Page 35). As we talked further, she spoke of the stress that she was experiencing because of these rows:

"I can't take much more. Roy's never in . . . and when he is in it's just a row . . . Mum's all I've got and we've never really got on. . . . She was always going on at me when I was at school. Now she takes it out on me because he's the way he is. . . . Sometimes I think it would be worth it to pay somebody to come in . . . but she'd take it the wrong way . . . and I don't know what I'd do without her. I'm just fed-up with things the way they are. She's on Roy's side about the integrated. . . I've thought on giving up work, but I'd go mad . . . couldn't afford to anyhow . . ."

Blamires et al (1997) suggest that grandparents may expect a rewarding role with their grandchildren, especially because there is none of the worry about being totally responsible. This notion of not being totally responsible may in part explain why Valerie's mother draws Nathan's behaviour to Valerie's attention, that is, she may be recognising that Nathan is Valerie's responsibility, just as Valerie was hers. This responsibility for Valerie

remains evident in the support she provides so that Valerie can remain at work, and also in her willingness to wash sheets so that Valerie can hide the extent of Nathan's bedwetting from Roy. The latter is an indicator of the dimensions of Valerie's trust in her mother, with whom, as she went on to talk about, she feels confident to disclose a wide range of emotions:

"I suppose Mum's the best friend I've got. . . We talk about all sorts. . . I can tell her anything. . . She still tells me off like I'm six . . . and she's got some real old fashioned ideas . . . but she wouldn't let me down in front of anybody else."

However, Valerie also referred to how her mother found it hard to understand how Nathan could have a disability without showing some external physical signs:

"Mum thinks Nathan should have a go at the eleven-plus. I've explained about his dyspraxia . . she even took him to speech therapy sessions . . . and OT she knows he was born with special needs . . . but in her day you were either backward or looked like a spastic . . . Nathan's not slow . . and he looks normal."

Anyone who has been to school is likely to use the experience gained there when forming opinions about educational issues, even though, in theatrical terms, they have only seen *"the front of the house"* (Gorard, 1997, p. 38). This can result in differing perceptions of the same educational issue, which can lead to conflict, especially if individuals rely on memories of their old school days in creating values on which to judge current issues (West et al, 1995). Valerie's mother's experiences of education lie in the pre-1986 era and the culture and language of categorisation (Page 45). The subtle nature of motor/learning difficulties (Chesson et al, 1990) mean that Nathan does not match with her notion of *"spastic"*. Neither is he one of the *"slow"*

ones". Rather, Nathan fits with her memory of the 'normal' within school and therefore should *"have a go at the eleven plus"*. His attendance at speech therapy and occupational therapy (OT) are not necessarily seen as indicative of impairment, as speech defects and clumsiness are evident within the population as a whole. This perception of Nathan as 'normal' may also explain why his grandmother rewards his behaviour with criticism as opposed to compassion (Chesson et al, 1990), and why she intimates that Valerie should address these transgressions in line with her parental responsibilities. On the other hand, Valerie through lived experience with Nathan has been exposed to the prevailing culture and language of special educational needs. Unlike her mother, Valerie does not differentiate between Nathan's medical label of dyspraxia and his education label of special needs. She considers Nathan as having been born with special needs (Page 143). As I mentioned on page 74, my studies of education have led me to an understanding that there is a distinction and no necessary correlation between the medical label of dyspraxia and the education label of special needs. However, to my parental view one label is just a continuation of the other, and although different coaches strike at different junctures (Page 8), they form a whole in which the identity is the sum of the parts, that is, my son. This continuum of identity allows for the understanding that he was born with special needs.

I note here that Tiernan, Nathan and Aaron were opted out of the Transfer Tests. Laura and Nicholas are statemented and therefore did not have the option to opt in or out.

5th and 19th November 1999 – Children sit Transfer Tests

VIGNETTE

While in Australia, William began to keep a diary about Laura. He continued with this on his return and posted a photocopy of his entries once

a month under the heading of *William's Musings*. Laura sat her psychological tests on 5th November.

"Wed 17th Nov 1999

Meeting the Educational Psychologist to discuss Laura's performance after her P7 Assessment re Xfer to Sec. Education.

The meeting took place in our home and lasted for 1¾ hours. She discussed Laura's performance in detail with the conclusion that she was suitable for Mainstream Secondary Education. In her advice – Classroom Assistant provision would need to continue.

It was a relief to know Laura had performed to her potential in the test. The one area where she has significant problems is in performance output where her ability to copy patterns, complete sequencing tasks and do jigsaws was tested.

It was very emotional to hear how poorly she had scored in that area of the test and to reflect if it would improve. Also what impact would it have for her future life?

I know there were a lot of positive points made and we have a lot to be thankful for with regard to Laura's attitude and determination, but it's always the 'bad' points I tend to focus upon and worry about.

All our questions were answered very capably and honestly. A form was mentioned by number only once and in a light- hearted way!

She explained adequately the future process of Xferring i.e. in January we will have a meeting in the school where Laura's options will be discussed. Prior to that all the relevant medical reports will be updated. It was encouraging to note that Dyspraxia is viewed by the Ed. Psych. as a medical problem. When we originally went

through the statementing process this definitely was not the case and we therefore had to fight for a Classroom Assistant.

18.11.99

Recently I have been lulled into a false sense of security – Laura seems to be coming on well and is reasonably happy at school. When Miss M began to talk of all Laura's problems the realisation that this condition is not going to go away hit hard. While Laura has been progressing for outsiders her problems must appear very obvious.

The Ed.Psych was extremely pleasant and helpful – after eleven years of meeting and talking to countless professional people about Laura, most of whom have been very helpful, it was refreshing to meet with one who showed no professional snobbery and who did not approach us in a patronising way. She was easy to talk to and gave the impression she had all the time in the world for our child and us. She also listened as well as talked.

She recognised Laura's problems, was sympathetic to them and gave the impression that she would urge continued classroom assistance plus a further visit from IT adviser.

I am encouraged that Laura can make mainstream education, although concerned about what school she will end up in.

Fri 19th

Laura was not upset by the fact that it was day of 2nd Xfer test. I think she was reassured that her test was over and she had done well.

Met one of the girls in her class, who is having a sleepover tonight. She was pleasant with Laura but in a patronising way – Laura appears not to notice this."

January – February 2000 Secondary School Open Days/Nights

Over this two-month period secondary schools hold open events. Advertisements are placed in newspapers inviting transferring pupils and their parents to tour the host school. Local newspapers print coverage of these open events, with most articles providing a picture spread and a review of the principal's address (Appendix 5.1 provides a random example). Up to and including the year 2000, schools have made available the Department of Education's performance tables at these events. On February 2000 the Minister for Education, Martin McGuinness, announced that 2000 could be the last year for the publication of such tables. The Northern Ireland Assembly passed an amendment to this effect in December 2000.

10 February 2000

Lorna usually gets home from work at around quarter-to-six, but when I arrived at her home at half-past six, she had still not returned and her mother was getting anxious. She arrived about ten minutes later, explaining that she had been delayed by road works. Sidney was at a meeting of the school chess club. I asked if she had been to visit any secondary schools:

Lorna: *"No, I haven't bothered. Aaron will be going to the secondary. . . . they'll stick him in with the stupid ones and call it learning support or something fancy . . . so what's the point. He'll visit it with his class in June or sometime all just a bit of a show. I'm more concerned that he's not ready. We want him to stay another year at the*

*primary. . . . but they won't hear tell of it . . .
say he's better off with his own age."*

Sylvia: *"What do you think?"*

Lorna: *"As I've told you before he's about two
years younger than he is. Didn't you say that
your Graeme was the same?"*

This notion of immaturity surfaced early in the study, and was alluded to by each family. Margarite, for example, spoke of how Nicholas had not been ready for playschool (Page 63), Valerie of how Nathan was happier in the playground with the younger children (Page 59), Lorna of how only the younger ones would play with Aaron and Patricia of how Tiernan preferred spending time with his young cousins than playing football (Page 35).

Goddard (1996) argues that motor skills provide outward signs of the maturity of the central nervous system, and that attention, balance and coordination are fundamental to the learning process (Goddard, 1996). The work of Goddard and her colleagues on primitive reflexes (Appendix 2.1 and page 65), suggests that the retention of these, beyond six months of age, may result in immature behaviour patterns. Alternatively, there may be the retention of immature systems despite the acquisition of later skills. This tethering to an earlier stage of development hinders the development of the later skills required in school, as instead of becoming automatic, skills such as reading and writing can only be acquired through continuous conscious effort. Goddard (1996, p.1) quotes a parent as describing her child as like *"having an infant still active within a ten year old's body."* This echoes the sentiment of Valerie as quoted on page 61.

Goddard Blythe considers that:

“Although learning takes place in the brain, it is the body which acts as both a receptor for information and the medium through which knowledge is expressed. Speech is dependent upon the motor system for the control of the lips and the tongue: writing is a motor task which involves coordination of the eyes and the hand with the support of the postural system. Even reading is an oculo-motor skill”

(Goddard Blythe, 2000, p. 15)

Such a paradigm calls for an approach to learning that takes full account of children’s readiness for the demands of formal schooling in terms of their physiological and physical development.

However, in modernist capitalist societies the concept of childhood is not seen in purely biological or developmental terms (Armstrong, 1995). For instance, as children grow there is a psychosocial expectation of a level of refinement of movement in line with chronological age. Thus, when a child begins school (in the academic year in which s/he is five) it is often assumed that:

“he/she will be able to sit still, pay attention, hold a writing implement and get her/his eyes to make the movements necessary to follow along a line of print.”

(Goddard Blythe, 2000, p. 154)

In our everyday language clichés such as *“Act your age”*, *“Don’t be a baby”* and *“You’re old enough to know better”* (Garner & Sandow, 1995, p. 21) reflect the psychosocial beliefs that actions and responsibilities are age-related. The principles of such beliefs have been instilled in us by psychologists such as Kohlberg and Erickson, as well as Piaget and Freud, and the philosophies of our society have been adapted to match these

concepts of the nature of childhood development (Garner & Sandow, 1995). At the foundation of this is the notion of normal child development in line with chronological age as opposed to biological development (Goddard, 1996). Care must be taken, however, not to assume that a system structured on biological school readiness is more natural than one based on chronological expectation. Both are cultural products, the choice is between whether one prefers a *“return to nature,”* or a *celebration of the “higher law” of culture*” (Shepherdson, 2001, p. 8).

Within its structure the education system has many rules and procedures which are based on an expectation of biological development in line with chronological age. This phenomenon is identifiable in, for example, school inspection reports which allude to the under five’s ability to hold a pencil correctly (David & Nurse, 1999), the age-related Key Stages of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and the Transfer Process which takes place at eleven-plus. Whilst many children may acquire the required skills in line with chronological expectation, others do not, and this potentially places them at a disadvantage in a system structured on a chronological as opposed to a biological pattern of development (Goddard, 1996).

Within a chronologically based education system identified developmental/chronological expectation imbalance is addressed through curricular and teaching approaches. The curricular and teaching approaches to special needs, which followed Burt’s identification of *“improvable scholastic deficiency”* were founded on an attitude in which it was the child who needed trained-up to fit the given curriculum (Clough, 2000, p.18). Remedial provision diverted attention from the ‘normal’ curriculum, and so the curriculum could remain static. The 1960s and 1970s brought a major ideological shift from elitism to equality of opportunity within education, which was demonstrated in practice in England and Wales by the move from the categorisation of children by the eleven plus to the adoption of a comprehensive system. The concept of the curriculum made a complementary shift to one in which:

“the curriculum [is] . . . drawn up as a hierarchy of target skills and knowledges to be mastered. At the top of the hierarchy is the basic subject area . . . which has targets . . . Each of these targets is broken down into teaching aims . . . and these are further divided into pupil objectives which state what pupils have to do to demonstrate that they have mastered a teaching objective.”

(Reason et al, 1990, p. 1026)

The present education system in Northern Ireland adheres to the ideology of elitism by retaining selection at eleven-plus (Page 47). Yet, pays homage to the ideology of equal opportunities through the N.I. Curriculum. It is at the transfer stage that the impact of the rub between these two ideologies is visible to parents, as it is at this juncture that inclusion/exclusion by ability is sandwiched between periods of inclusion through curricular differentiation. As I referred to on page 123 academic qualifications are the principal determinant in job opportunities, and many parents aspire to a grammar school education for their children, as they consider that this promises the best life chances (Gallagher, 2000). The societal value placed on the grammar school education is reflected in everyday language, as despite the official language that surrounds the Transfer Tests, Gallagher (2000) found that most people discuss them in terms of ‘passing’ and ‘failing’. Lorna considers that Aaron would benefit from another year in primary school. However, the dictates of a chronologically based education system do not allow for this, and at this juncture rather than being caught in the safety-net of a differentiated curriculum he is *“written off as a failure”* (Lorna, February 2000) by selection at eleven-plus.

7th – 18th February 2000 – Primary school principals hold interviews with parents, during which Transfer Report forms are completed for sending to Boards.

As Nicholas and Laura are statemented their parents were not included in this interview process. Tiernan's formal assessment was still in progress, so although the Board would decide his placement on its issue, at this stage he was still taking part in the Transfer Process. Patricia and Kieran were invited to interview.

18th February 2000

Patricia phoned in the early afternoon, just after her meeting with the school principal. We arranged to meet at one o'clock on 22nd February.

22nd February 2000

Patricia was eager to talk about the meeting:

Patricia: *"Father [] tried to talk down to me. Knows me from school . . . I'm no wee girl now. I'm a married woman. My adviser says that as Tiernan's goin' through the Code there's no point fillin' in the form. The school said it had to be filled in as he mightn't go right through the Code. He'll go right through it. I'll see to that. They've neglected him long enough."*

Sylvia: *"Did you complete the form?"*

Patricia: *". . . only filled in one school. That's the one he'll be going to. If there's no room they can make room. Needn't think they can stop his statement now. Not after all this."*

Armstrong (1995), writing about parent-partnership in the context of special educational needs assessments, refers to the mismatch in the perceptions of professionals and parents as to the amount of information that is given by the former to the latter. For example, professional records may show that information was given, but parents may refute this, insisting that they had to scratch around outside the education system for advice (Blamires et al, 1997). From a simplistic view it may appear that both professional and parent cannot be right. However, as noted by Chia (1999, p. 10) it can be *"difficult to ascertain whether parents were actually informed . . . or were unable to absorb the information given to them"* by professionals. The meetings and decisions to which Patricia is subjected as part of Tiernan's transfer belong within a cultural context that is *"essentially a professional culture to which parents have only limited access"* (Armstrong, 1995, p. 53). This culture has been built up over time and is a professional one, mainly because it is professionals who were involved in its development and refinement. Parents are but visitors, who are admitted only as and when the rules, drawn up by the culture permit, and

"Lacking the cultural memory that might give them access to power many parents remain ignorant of significant aspects of the context within which negotiations take place."

(Armstrong, 1995, p.53)

Patricia phoned the following Friday evening with the news that she had received Tiernan's draft statement:

"See my adviser was right . . . try tellin' that to Father []. The psycho's sidekick's comin' back on Thursday to talk to me and Kiernan about it. I'll have had it checked out by then. . . . No school filled in yet, but it's our pick."

26th May – Letters issued advising parents of the secondary school that has accepted their child.

27th May 2000

Valerie rang shortly after receiving her letter from the Board:

“Nathan’s got a place in the big school. I still wish I’d put down the integrated. . . . too late now. We’re going out this afternoon to make a start on the uniform. If you leave it too late the sizes are sold out. . . We’ll get a MacDonald’s to celebrate.”

The family decision not to include the integrated school in the choices of secondary school had been influenced mainly by Roy. He had spoken of his views in an earlier interview (February 1999):

“Valerie wants to look at the integrated. . . . thinks they’re a nicer crowd than the secondary. But we’re no mixed marriage. I’m from Belfast. . . . a blow-in. This might be the back of nowhere but people might start thinking and get the wrong end of the stick. You never know what gets into their heads. The mother-in-law knows what I mean. Valerie’s just too trusting.”

The rural area in which Valerie and Roy live is predominantly Protestant, as are both Roy and Valerie. Despite having lived within the community for twelve years, Roy still considers himself a “*blow-in*”, and it is this assumed identity of a stranger within the community that causes his fear of being erroneously identified as a threat. He literally fears for his life even though there is no tangible reason to do so. Valerie’s mother agrees with him (Page 142), and so in light of the possible consequences if Roy is right, Valerie agrees not to seek a place in the integrated school. Thus, behind the united view of school choice put forward by Valerie and Roy, there is a difference of opinion, which arises principally because each is an individual with

his/her own individual world-life view. Within the Transfer Procedure literature and the Code of Practice (DENI,1998b) it is assumed that parents speak in unison, with acknowledgement given only to the possible differing views of parents who are divorced or separated. Parents often have different expectations and hopes for their child, and whilst it is acceptable for professionals to differ in their professional view, it is generally expected that parents will be in agreement (Blamires et al, 1997). Differing opinions can put strain on the family not only because of the expectation to agree, but also because it is hard to come to a decision if one is not in favour. Additionally s/he may feel isolated and unsupported by those he/she may expect to feel closest to. This provides a seedbed for possible future conflict within the family, if and when a problem arises in the chosen school.

Lorna rang later in the afternoon with news that Aaron would be going to the High School:

"I knew they would stick him in with the stupid ones. . . but it's real now. . . have to make the best of it. He's all pleased. Mum had a cake in ready . . .He's going next Saturday to get his uniform . . . buy it big and he'll grow into it."

She talked about her relief that Aaron's primary school days were almost over, and as our conversation progressed she spoke increasingly positively about the imminent change:

"I think the change of school will be good for Aaron – a fresh start. That's the way I'm going to look at it, a fresh start."

31 May 2000

William phoned early in the morning. The family was packed and ready to leave for a holiday in Scotland. He related how, as he had not heard of Laura's placement by the previous Friday afternoon, he had telephoned the psychologist. She had just phoned to say that Laura was being placed in the integrated school of their choice:

"It's a good start to the holidays. Laura's delighted."

5th June 2000

Margarite was in the garden when I arrived just after three o'clock. She was deadheading the plants in her hanging baskets while *"keeping an eye out"* for Nicholas's taxi. She had hidden a sherbet dip in the garden for him to find:

"I have a little something every day. . . . nothing big, but he really enjoys looking for it. We play 'getting cold' and 'getting hot' until he finds it. Peter thinks it encourages him to be babyish . . . What's the harm? Peter's here today. He's started to do more with Nicholas now."

The taxi arrived at twenty past three. Margarite hugged Nicholas and they played their game to find the sherbet dip. Once found Nicholas went to feed his rabbits and to find his cat in the back garden. We went into the conservatory, where Peter was working on some papers. After we had exchanged greetings the conversation turned to Nicholas's placement:

Peter: *"The Board suggested the secondary. . . not really our type. . . It's all they can offer. I understand that. We've decided to send him to an independent school."*

Margarite: *"We're lucky to get him in. Had our interview last Thursday. The Board have said that they'll OK the placement, but we'll have to pay. . . . He'll go as a day boy. It's a weight off my mind."*

Sylvia: *"Why do you say that?"*

Margarite: *"There are some tough ones in the secondary."*

Peter: *"Tough ones everywhere. Difference is we might be able to do something about it. Margarite's just too close to Nicholas. . . needs to cut the apron strings."*

Margarite appeared flustered and excused herself, saying she was going to check on Nicholas.

Peter: *"It's hard for Margarite. I couldn't want for a better mother for Nicholas. . . I don't like being hard on her, but Nicholas has to harden up or he won't survive. Time I took more of an interest . . . it's that time."*

When Margarite returned she looked as though she had been crying. I asked if she was OK and suggested that we finish up the interview so as to leave time for me to see Nicholas's rabbit before leaving:

Margarite: *"I'm fine. . . but, yes, I'd like to finish now. Nicholas has a lot to show you . . . poor wee love. It's hard . . . but he'll be OK."*

Peter: *"Of course he will. . . We'll get through it.
Have we ever not yet?"*

I felt privileged to have witnessed this moment, from which, although present, I felt rightly excluded.

As I drove home I recalled that Patricia was the only parent not to have received a school placement. I phoned her the next morning and, as I was going on holiday, arranged to meet with her later in the month.

25th June 2000

Patricia was waiting at the front door:

"I've made us a cuppa. Kieran's up at his Ma's. . . Told me to ring him when you got here. Tiernan and him's getting' on really well. They're doin' up a scrambler. . . That's it out the back."

She pointed through the kitchen window to a bike leaning against the back hedge. Generally Patricia was keen to talk about Tiernan, but this time she insisted on waiting on Kiernan:

"We'd better wait for the boss."

When Kieran arrived about ten minutes later, I remarked on the scrambler:

"Good. Isn't it. He's a big boy now, Time he started doing men's things. . No time and he'll be ready for work and his own woman. Can't have the boys at the big school calling him a Mammy's boy."

It seemed as though Patricia, Kieran and Tiernan had passed through a special event in their lives: *"a 'key incident' around which pivotal decisions*

revolve [and] which leads to major decisions or directions being taken" (Measor, 1983, study communication quoted in The Open University, 1994, p. 75). In Alex Hayley's book *Roots*, Kunta Kinte is taken from his mother's care and led with similar aged boys from the West African Mandika Tribe to the training grounds. When he returns he is a warrior, who must live in his own hut and learn the skills of his father before taking a wife of his own. Those who did not prove themselves at the training grounds return to the village, where they are treated as children forever. Kunta Kinte's mother must accept the demands of her culture and from now on address her son as a warrior. This testing at the training grounds marks a special time in the life and culture of the Mandika people, just as the transfer from primary to secondary school marks a special time for the participants in the study. Special times like these are a means of putting meaning, organisation and shape to life; a marker that allows for change. In Foucauldian terms the transfer creates a gap which allows for change. This change is directed towards the next gap in the cycle, that is, leaving school and becoming an adult. The essence of being 'one of' lies within the group, and the fathers of the boys see the transfer from primary to secondary school as the time to begin the formulation of the social male identity.

I observed little change in how William and Joan spoke about Laura (the only girl in the study). However, my interview notes reveal that in early June 2000, William did refer as to how he was glad that Laura was a girl:

*"It's a blessing she's not a boy - for her sake . . . not ours.
Girls can stay at home and no one notices . . . but a boy . .
that's different."*

Valerie intimated similar sentiments, but from the perspective of the mother of a boy:

*"Roy says it would be easier if Nathan was a girl . . . Not
for us . . . but for him. Girls can do housey things*

Maybe get a wee part-time job. . . Have a family. . . No need for exams. Boys need GCSEs if they're to get any sort of job."

As I mentioned on page 137 the female identity within the study families is very much linked to "*hearth and home*" and the male identity to that of breadwinner. There is some blurring of this identity, as the mothers (apart from Joan) have jobs outside the home. However, the study mothers all take responsibility for the family's domestic arrangements. This includes Joan, for whom running the home falls within the remit of the duties of a minister's wife. Thus, the foundation of the model of family life of the study group, differs little from that of when the 1947 Education Act was introduced (Page 43 - 44). In the fifty-plus intervening years since its introduction, the procedures of the transfer have changed behind the scenes, but for those at the front of the house the show goes on. A show that is paradoxically altered yet unchanged, as within it, it is perceived by many that the able 'pass' the eleven-plus, the less able 'fail' and those who opt out have 'chosen to fail' (Gallagher, 2000). However, within the same time span secondary school education has changed, with a shift of ethos from one in which a taking of examinations was not encouraged to a pseudo-grammar school culture, which until the abandonment of the League Tables in December 2000 (Page 147) had come to measure its own successes/failures on position in examination tables. As I noted on page 123 this change has widened opportunities for some, but closed doors for others as employers demand GCSE passes for jobs that once required perceived aptitude as opposed to measured academic ability. William recognises that, as a female adult, it will be socially acceptable for Laura to step back from the job-market and fit into a domestic role.

As I reflected on this, I visualised my sister-in-law Joan, who at school was categorised as educationally subnormal. After leaving school she worked in a bakery putting blobs of cream on buns as they came off a conveyor belt. She married the works mechanic and has successfully mothered five

children. Her distance from the norm is invisible. In contrast I thought of another boy in my class at primary school. He too was categorised as educationally subnormal. His words and language appear little different to Joan's, but he is known as the 'wee simple man that brushes the streets'. Although outside the remit of this study, I cannot help but question if the label of special educational needs is a crueler and tighter bind for boys than for girls. This is for another study.

30th June 2000

Patricia phoned at just after 11.30 a.m. to say that Tiernan's statement was issued:

"They've put him in [school]. Should have just done it in the first place. . . .saved a lot of time and money. I know their sort . . . just keepin' themselves in a job. At least Tiernan's out of that primary school. He'll be with his cousins. They'll look after him."

It somehow seemed apt that the first parent to contact should also be the last, as this, in a sense, brought data collection full circle. This does not mean that I felt a sense of completeness, and that my contact with and interest in the participants had come to an abrupt stop. Rather, we had reached a socially constructed gap in our experiential journey; a gap in which I could take time to relate the issues of identity and normality that had emerged from progressive focus to the to the research question.

A Desire for Anonymity

I met again with each of the families during the last two weeks of August 2000. I wanted to ensure that each was happy with the interview transcripts and to ascertain whether or not they wanted to be identified in the final study.

The parents all chose to remain anonymous within this text, and each decided on his/her own pseudonym. Each sought visibility for his/her story, yet, also wanted invisibility. I sensed a fear of 'punishment' for speaking out. However, none gave any evidence of any written or spoken rule that they had broken, and identified no one who had said that they could not take part in the study or that they should temper their input. Below are some of the reasons that the parents gave for this choice:

"Laura's doing OK now with the psychologist. I don't want to get her back up. She's got too many on her list . . . She's already jumped Laura up her list . . . didn't have to. This is too big a time for Laura."

(Joan, September 2000)

"I'm not feared o' them or nothin' . . . they're for nothin' . . . it's Tiernan. They'd take it out on him. He wouldn't tell me . . . He's deep but he feels it all the same. They can talk about me all they want . . . I can talk about them [laughing] . . . but they'd take it out on him."

(Patricia, August 2000)

"I wouldn't want his teacher knowing it was him. I don't care about the psychologist. Nathan doesn't have to see him everyday."

(Valerie, September 2000)

"I don't want someone reading it that knows us. Nathan gets enough stick without me helping. There's his brothers as well No keep our names out of it. I don't care about the ones in [Board Headquarters] . . . they couldn't give a fiddler's fart about me . . . but's there's Nathan."

(Roy, September 2000)

"If Nicholas was bigger he could decide . . . No, his Daddy wouldn't like it Maybe I should . . . No you'd never know who'd read it . . . I'll think about it. No, it's a no. He has it hard enough, poor wee love."

(Margarite, September 2000)

"If he [Aaron] was older, I'd say yes, but he's got too long to go and too much to lose."

(Lorna, September 2000)

CHAPTER SIX

The Findings Meet the Research Question

How is power weighted in the decision-making processes of the transfer from primary to secondary school of children with dyspraxia in Northern Ireland?

Early in the study Dr Spencer, my doctoral tutor, directed me towards the writings of Michel Foucault. I admit that initially I was doubtful as to the relevance of his philosophies to my research question. However, as the words of the parents fed into the literature and vice versa, and the issues of identity and normality emerged from progressive focusing I gradually came to understand the significance of Foucault's work to my study. This was twofold. Firstly it allowed for an abandonment of the conventional notion of history as continuous and progressive, which appeals to the grand narratives of modernism (Shepherdson, 2001), and permitted instead a search within historical discourses for gaps or disjunctures which allow for change (Allan, 1996). This had relevance, both to my understanding of emancipatory research and the findings of the study. For example on page 78 I described how the emerging postmodern climate of the 1960s and 1970s provided a gap that allowed space for the voice of critical research to be heard in a climate that was then dominated by a positivist discourse. Later on page 159 I wrote of how the gap at school transfer allowed Patricia and Kiernan to review and consequently change their adopted roles within the family. Secondly it allowed for a movement away from a perception of power in which the State is on one side and the individuals who are under the State's power are on the other. This made space for a conception of power in which:

"Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather something which functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in everybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation, And not only do individuals circulate between threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power not its points of application."

(Foucault, 1980, p. 98, quoted in McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 89)

This enabled, through the appreciation of an invisible disciplinary power, for the exploration of how individuals are constructed:

"as subject to someone else, through control and constraint, and as a subject tied to their own identity by their conscience and self-knowledge."

(Allan, 1996, p. 220)

The foundation that allowed for this appreciation was a developing understanding of the postmodern concept of the Self.

The Self

Modernism promotes the concept of a body which "*possesse[s] an interiority containing a mind or a soul*" and an exterior "*upon which the mind or soul forges a public face*" (Fox, 1993, p. 23). The postmodernist perspective removes this inside/outside metaphor and replaces it with the idea of a surface without depth, in which:

"Subjectivity is no longer understood as a phenomenon of the essential, but as an effect of power which has been inscribed on its surface."

(Fox, 1993, p. 23)

In the postmodernist view, only the anatomical body is present at birth. The Self develops through the process of social experience (Mead, 1997), and has the unique characteristic of being both subject and object to itself. An individual experiences his/her Self not directly, but indirectly from:

"the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs."

(Mead, 1997, p. 437)

Standpoints can vary within the same social group. For example, on page 143, Valerie related how her view of Nathan's ability to sit the eleven-plus and the nature of his dyspraxia differed from her mother's. The postmodernist explanation of these differences lies in the Self, which is both subject and object. An individual enters his/her own experiences by first becoming an object to her/himself, just as others are objects to him/herself. To become an object to him/herself, the individual must take on:

"the attitudes of other individuals towards himself within a social environment or context of experience and behaviour in which both he and they are involved."

(Mead, 1997, p. 437)

Both Valerie and her mother base their standpoint on education on that prevailing within the social group at the time of her involvement. For Valerie's mother this was in a period in which categorisation was accepted practice. Whilst Valerie's experiences with Nathan are encased in the notion of special educational needs. From a Foucauldian perspective the

explanation of their differing standpoints lies in the historical conditions that produced their forms of consciousness. Categorisation thrived in a period in which education was dominated by the medical profession. Whilst special educational needs flourishes in the post-Warnock era which is dominated by educational psychologists and administrators. Thus, whilst the Self is real it is at one and the same time a fabrication, that is, the effect of the inscription of power on the political surface of the body (Fox, 1993).

The Inscription of Power

Historically sovereign power was adequate for societal control in the Middle Ages. Then the people could see quite clearly the power and the forces acting upon them - the king's laws, the king's justice etc. However it was found wanting, when faced with the demands of the Industrial Revolution, which created both a huge floating population (as citizens moved from the country to the town) and a:

"growth in the apparatus of production, which was becoming more and more extended and complex; it was also becoming more costly and its profitability had to be increased."

(Foucault, 1984a, p. 207)

The technology of disciplinary power developed in correspondence to these needs, and the direction and structure of society, which formerly was provided by the agency of a sovereign, now depended on the efficiency of organisation of the social matrices through and on which power operated. Unlike sovereign power, in which the ultimate domination was death, disciplinary power took charge of life as opposed to threatening it, and in so doing gained access to the political surface of the body (McHoul & Grace, 1993). The agents of sovereign power remain as the visible nodes of disciplinary power (the professionals). However, within disciplinary power, the agents of sovereign power are as enmeshed and disciplined by disciplinary power as are the subjects they discipline. Further, their actions

are limited by the identities (e.g. teacher, psychologist) that power has inscribed on their political surfaces.

The visible agents of disciplinary power are recognised by themselves and others as such. This is exemplified by Patricia's actions of pleading, asking and sending solicitor's letters in order to get a meeting with the psychologist. Whilst his keeping her waiting for an 'audience' demonstrates that he reciprocates this understanding (Page 113). When sovereign power operates, we know when we have been acted on and by whom. So, for instance, William was aware that the psychologist had set a date for the administration of Laura's psychological tests. The compliment to this is the understanding that sovereign power acts discretely and in response to a particular set of circumstances. This means that those on whom it is exercised are free of its power for most of their lives. Thus, William was free to take Laura to Australia (Page 135) without interference from the psychologist.

Within disciplinary power, the visible aspects of sovereign power serve to divert the attention (and thus blind) the players to the 'gaze' of the disciplinary power to which they are all subject.

The 'Gaze'

The precise nature of the surveillance of the 'gaze' of disciplinary power is difficult to explain, and my understanding is based on Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon; the exemplar of modern surveillance, which inspired Foucault's study of the disciplinary society (Rabinow, 1984). This architectural design allows for the permanent surveillance of prisoners by hidden observers. Inmates are visible to the supervisor in the tower alone:

"All that is needed then is to place a supervisor in a central tower, and place in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy . . . they are like so many cages, so many small theatres in which each

actor is alone, perfectly individualised, and constantly visible . . . Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap."

(Foucault, 1979, p. 200)

This technology controls not through the direct and visible application of power by a sovereign or his agent, but via an impersonal and invisible 'gaze'. At its heart is the production of an individual of a certain type, who with respect to a norm can be used and assigned in an efficient and effective manner within society. In other words, the production of a society in which each one 'knows one's place' (McHoul & Grace, 1993). Its efficiency is closely tied to its invisibility, as for disciplinary power to be effective it is the subject and not the power that must be seen, that is, the 'gaze' must be thought to operate even when it is not turned on. This provides an explanation for the parents' fear of punishment for taking part in the study. Each child is trapped in the 'gaze' of disciplinary power, but the parents are blind to its invisible presence. So Joan, for instance, is unaware that it is the 'gaze' that has inscribed a special needs identity on Laura. Her focus is on the visible node of disciplinary power, the psychologist, who Joan identifies as the provider of resources that she values, such as a classroom assistant. Joan does not "*want to get [the psychologist's] back up*" (Page 162) for fear of losing resources. A fear which is intensified by Joan's perception that the psychologist, as a personal favour, had "*already jumped Laura up her list*" (Page 162).

Foucault describes three forms of surveillance – hierarchical observation, normalisation and the examination.

Hierarchical Observation

The technique of the Panopticon was introduced into education in the 18th Century, in response to a rapidly increasing school population, which

required ordering. This method of disciplining was more efficient than sovereign power because surveillance was everywhere and constant, and more effective because it functioned permanently and largely in silence, and created a network of reciprocal power relationships in which supervisors were perpetually supervised (Allan, 1996). The children within the study are subject to elements of this type of hierarchical surveillance. Within school, for instance, Laura has a classroom assistant, a class teacher, a special needs co-ordinator and a head-teacher monitoring her progress. The whole is held together so that each player monitors the one above and below.

Whilst all pupils are subject to hierarchical surveillance within school, for children with special needs, the 'gaze' extends past the classroom into breaks and even the home. Allan (1996, p. 222) notes that interpersonal relationships are "*often viewed as equally important, if not more so than [the] attainment of mainstream curricular goals.*" In the playground children with special needs are scrutinised to see how well they interact with others, not just by teachers but also by parents. Joan, for example, observed Laura at the summer scheme (Page 60) and Valerie drove down to school to watch Nathan in the playground (Page 59). The 'gaze' legitimises all aspects of the child's relationships and emotional welfare. This includes access to medical history, which has the effect of extending the 'gaze' beyond education and potentially to birth. Surveillance also extends to the home. The psychologist, for example, visited William at home to discuss Laura's tests (Page 145) and the "*psycho's side-kick*" called with Patricia (Page 114). Non-special needs children are not subject to such scrutiny, which is justified for special needs children by the argument that it enables professionals to show concern for the children's welfare and also to determine progress. However, behind this facade, silently and invisibly, disciplinary power is building a body of knowledge (preparing a case) at the expense of the subject (Rabinow, 1984). A body of knowledge that is:

*"somewhat disturbingly most quick to pronounce
truths about human nature, human potential, human*

endeavour, and the future of the human condition in general."

(McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 58)

Normalisation

Thus, disciplinary power shapes us and constructs us as subjects and inscribes the identities of power on our bodies, so that we are unaware of its shaping or inscription (Fox, 1993). Laura, for instance, has been inscribed with a special needs identity, with which her mother believes she was born (Page 131). This is the importance of its swiftness and light; it deprives us of the opportunity for resistance, and once shaped and inscribed we have no desire to revolt. It produces a form of docility and conformity, which brings us all to the same normal range of practices and beliefs and defines the way that we are supposed to be. This serves the ordering functions of power as it helps create individuals of a certain type. Without such conformity the parents talking to Joan at the school gates would have been spared embarrassment (Page 128) and "*wee Gary Campbell's father*" would not have had to change the subject from an enquiry about whether or not Nathan was doing the eleven-plus to talk of his roof conversion (Page 139). Such conformity ensures that the normal takes on the guise of the natural, and that which is the product of power's operation is accepted as the true way the world is. Thus normalisation takes us away from the natural law towards a law of language in which force is tied to representation and "*the space of the body is given over to the unnatural network of discourse and its causality*" (Shepherdson, 2001, p. 18). Such language cannot be 'read' correctly by just anyone, the reader must be an expert (Fox, 1993). This is the language of power, and although professionals each have their own jargon, each can still talk to the other (Corbett, 1993). As professionals "*define the terms of reference, set the frame of discourse and disallow discordant language*" (Corbett, 1993, p. 79) parents are pushed to the margins. Patricia noted this marginalisation, when she spoke of the psychologist as having "[q]uoted a lot of statistics so [they] couldn't understand" and how he "*didn't talk talk*" (Page 115). William also

alluded to it indirectly, when in his musings he wrote that *“it was refreshing to meet with [a professional] who showed no professional snobbery, and who did not approach [him] in a patronising way”* (Page 146).

Normalisation appears to tend to homogeneity, but it also individualises by:

*“making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels
[and] to fix specialities.”* (Foucault, 1977, p. 184)

Rather than cause chaos or confusion, as the multiplicity of individualisation has the potential to do, individualisation around the norm is used to order and place individuals in an efficient and effective manner within the institutional machine. To do this normal must have meaning, and to have meaning normal must be measured and defined. This is the role of the examination.

The Examination

According to Foucault (1984d, p. 197), the examination is:

*“a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible
to qualify, to classify and to punish.”*

Through highly ritualised procedures, which combine hierarchical observation and the techniques of normalisation, the examination establishes a visibility, which allows for differentiation and judgement. It makes subjects of those perceived as objects, and objects of those who are subjected. For example, in the psychological tests administered to Laura, Laura is made a visible subject through the techniques of the examination. In turn she is made object by comparing with the tests' standards of normal ability (Allan, 1996). It is this becoming of an object that allows Laura to take on the identity that has been inscribed silently and invisibly by disciplinary power.

The examination allows for a measurement of the characteristics that the dominant power deems important enough to order and manage. Only the subject undergoes the trial, which is set by someone already considered to possess the skills or knowledge the other is seeking. For instance, it was a speech and language therapist who carried out the testing of Nicholas's speech problems. She was deemed to have the authority to examine and judge Nicholas, because she had already been examined, judged and determined as in possession of the knowledge deemed important by her professional body (i.e. expertise). However, it would be wrong to consider that the power of the professionals arises from professional expertise in its own right. Rather, the power of the professional is derived from his/her position within the state bureaucracy and the fact that it is the State, which defines the needs of its clients. The therapist is merely the vehicle of power, and one whose actions are limited by the inscription of the identity of the therapist.

The ritual of the examination involves administration and paperwork which:

“situates [individuals] in a network of writing: it engages them in a mass of documents that capture and fix them [under the gaze of] a permanent corpus of knowledge.”

(Foucault, 1984c, p.201)

This makes for a permanence which:

“at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power.”

(Foucault, 1984c, p.203)

In this way the examination (e.g. the Transfer Tests and psychometric tests) has the potential to capture and fix, not just a record of marks, but an identity (Allan, 1996). Writing in the *Larne Times* (10 February 2000), p. 9, Stuart Polley, the principal of Larne High School writes:

"[I] remember vividly [my] feelings of disappointment at failing the Eleven Plus. I can remember the embarrassment for my parents and my feeling of inadequacy that remained for many years. . . . The feeling of deflation and fragile emotions are still with me many years later."

Despite now having the identity of a secondary school principal, the identity of being a 'failure' at eleven-plus still lingers.

The examination allows for the comparison with others, which facilitates the drawing up of statistics and the defining of a norm. This compliments the desire to achieve order by furthering the placement of an individual within the educational hierarchy (Page 170). However, it would be erroneous to consider that 'normal' is an absolute. Consider the five study children. Each carries a medical diagnosis of dyspraxia, but within special educational needs each is judged differently. This is because additional factors such as difficulties in writing and reading, interpersonal relationships and home background have been included in the assessment. The acceptance of the rightness of this professional judgement lies in a belief in the superiority of the knowledge of the professional. For example, Margarite acknowledged this belief of 'knowing best' when she allowed Nicholas to be dragged into school by his teachers (Page 100). Furthermore, tests such as the "*special*" psychology tests administered to Laura (Page 135), serve to uphold the notion of the expert knowledge of the professionals.

The inclusion of the value judgements of professionals means that, just like Burt's definition of backwardness (Page 130), the definition of special educational needs is arbitrary and nebulous. Those who decide on the 'lighting up' times are influenced by external factors such as available resources, their understanding and appreciation of the child's difficulties and the presenting environment. Thus:

"[in] some circumstances the lights will be turned on early and those caught in the twilight are exposed to their glare. At other times the lights will only be turned on at the last possible moment, to conserve resources, thus leaving more individuals to roam freely (or at risk) in the twilight."

(Corbett, 1996, p.

20)

Before identification can take place, a suspicion of abnormality needs to be voiced. This may occur at birth, such as for Laura and Nicholas, pre-school as for Aaron and Nathan, or after starting school as for Tiernan. Early identification carries the promise of the benefits of early treatment and remediation (Portwood, 1999) by techniques which are designed to bring the subject closer to the desired norm. Margarite, for instance, told of how, on the issue of Nicholas's statement, he was placed in a speech and language unit, where he remained until he could 'talk' (Page 42). Learning to talk has and will continue to benefit. However, in terms of identity, early identification serves to promote inscription, as it allows for the accumulation of a greater body of knowledge over a greater period of time.

The Outcome of the Examination

If the judgements of the examination are to be seen and the inscribed identities visible, at some point the emergence of the rituals of the disciplinary power of the examination must meet with the visible sovereign. For those who sit the Transfer Tests, this comes with the issuing of the results. Whilst, for those who opt out of the Tests or are excluded, the meeting comes at the notification of secondary school placement. For William the meeting came with the psychologist's conclusion that Laura was fit for mainstream school (Page 145), whilst for Valerie and Lorna it was with the letter of placement from the Transfer clearing house at the Board. For Patricia it was with the issue of Nathan's statement, and for Margarite at the point of acceptance by the independent school. Following this, the language of the parents within the study suggested a move towards

a conformance to the identity inscribed on each of their children. Lorna, for instance, intimated this when she said that Aaron's placement "*was real now*" and that "*she had to make the best of it*" (Page 155). Valerie did express regret at not having "*put down the integrated as a school choice*", but spoke of "*mak[ing] a start on the uniform*" and "*getting a MacDonald's to celebrate*". Lorna also said that Aaron was "*going next Saturday to get his uniform*" and spoke of how her Mum "*had a cake in ready*" (Page 155). Such conformity results from the constant workings of the invisible constraints of disciplinary power that bring us all toward the same normal range of practices and beliefs. Transferring to secondary school is a normal thing to do. It is normal to buy a school uniform and it is normal to celebrate a graduation. Our greatest desire is to be seen as normal (Low, 1996), and these material tasks such as buying the school uniform, which signify normality, act to divert the attention so that disciplinary power can silently and invisibly reinforce its inscription.

Resistance to the 'Gaze'

The invisibility of the 'gaze' lessens the opportunity for resistance, because unlike sovereign power there is no visible locus against which to revolt. Yet, disciplinary power is everywhere. This might seem to make resistance easier, but power that is everywhere is in a sense nowhere. Further, through normalisation disciplinary power becomes equivalent to a force of nature (Page 171).

Theoretically, if disciplinary power was to work at full potential we could never verify that we have been disciplined. However, such efficiency is never realised, and the observation of disciplinary power is possible, once we know what to look for. Even then, there is no single target for resistance, and targeting a sovereign agent of disciplinary power only serves to tighten the grip of the 'gaze' (Armstrong, 1995). For example, Patricia considers the psychologist as the main adversary in her "*battle*" (Page 116) to redress what she sees as the neglect of Tiernan by his educators (Page 132). Thus,

she directs her resistance against him. However, this focus on the psychologist only serves to blind her to the disciplinary power, which is silently and invisibly tightening its grip through the 'gaze' of the formal assessment.

Becoming Other

Theoretically Foucault's philosophy of power provided a satisfactory means to relate my findings to the research question. However at a practical level I could not quite come to an acceptance of the docility and conformance of individuals to the identities imposed on them by power relations. Particularly, as this left little, if any, room for the exercise of free will. In Foucault's later period of ethics, his enquiry centres not so much on the control of the subject by the external 'other' as on the internal relation to the Self. Whilst this period of Foucault's work allows for resistance, the emphasis is still on control. Further, Foucault does not encourage or instruct anyone on how to take such action (Allan, 1996). A possible explanation for this lies in Foucault's tendency to reduce practice to structures (structuralist thinking) together with the absence in his work of "*real instances of people doing or saying or writing things*" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 57).

To assuage this perceived shortcoming, I turned to the writings of Nicholas Fox where I was introduced to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the Body-without-Organs (BwO) (Fox, 1993). The BwO is considered a contested realm, between the social world and the desire. For these writers the desire is a positive force:

"a material and positive investment of libido in a person or thing: the body's will to power" (Fox, 1993, p. 37).

From this stance, the Self and subjectivity are seen as the outcome of the inscription on the political surface of the body, not just by the Foucauldian disciplines, but also by the body's own will to power and the positive investments of libido in the body by others. "*This position denies the*

passiveness of the human body 'totally inscribed by discourse' (Fox, 1993, p.84), and allows for a moving through identities and a challenging of the inflexible definitions of normality (Corbett, 1996). Rather than 'pilgrims' of modernism, Deleuze and Guattari (1986) provide for the possibility of the 'nomads' of postmodernism, *"who remain nebulous in identity"* (Corbett, 1996, p. 100).

"The nomads, like the pilgrims, were all along busy constructing their identities, but theirs were 'momentary' identities, identities 'for today' until-further notice identities. Nomads do not bind the time/space, they move through it, and so they move through identities."

(Bauman (1992, p. 167, quoted in Corbett, 1996, p. 100)

How is Power Weighted?

I began the study with the admission of a belief that professionals had power (denoted by their superior knowledge) and authority (signified by their position within the education system) (Page 12). On the surface, this concept of the visible agents of power is unchanged. However, I no longer consider that the parents and the professionals are on opposing sides. Rather I perceive that all are caught in the same web of invisible disciplinary power, which orders, identifies, controls and directs by inscribing identities on the political surface of the body. In short, I now consider that power acts on something already constituted, that is, the identity.

Identities arise from the action of disciplinary power, which proceeds in four ways. Firstly it distributes people in their own space, for example, special needs/non-special needs or grammar school/high school. Secondly it controls activities by, for instance, setting the timetable for transfer from primary to secondary school. It does this because it recognises that the natural body does not naturally align itself to a *"clockwork composition of actions"* (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 69). Thirdly it divides training into segments, which allow for the transition from student to master. Each stage

is more difficult than the last, and this allows for a surveillance of skills, so that those who do not meet the set norm can be differentiated or set apart. Finally, it brings together the elementary parts so that *"the product of the various forces is increased by their calculated combination"* (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 69).

Identities enable by establishing an internal 'logic of identity', but also restrict, by limiting the flux of possibilities open to an individual to those of the inscribed identity (Duff, 1999). This enabling and restricting applies to all who are caught in the web of power relationships, because each and every individual is merely a vehicle of power. This does not mean that each vehicle carries an equal weighting of power. Rather, weighting depends on the 'truth' on which the societal norm is established. For it is according to this norm that identities are established and ordered.

In Western societies today 'truth' is seen as the product of science or scientific methods (McHoul and Grace, 1993). It is the 'truth' of the professionals, for it is only they who have been examined and deemed to have expertise in the knowledge judged important by the State. Power produces knowledge and uses this knowledge to create needs. Needs, which are seen by the needy to arise from their own failing or from circumstances over which they have no control (Armstrong, 1995), and which can only be addressed by those with knowledge and expertise, that is, the professionals. The technologies that harness the accumulation of knowledge and the subsequent development of expertise involve an unequal intercourse between the parties involved. For instance, in observation, surveillance is directed only towards the subject. The child/parent, for example, does not get an opportunity to observe the psychologist. Similarly, in normalising judgements, power lies with those who are perceived to possess expert knowledge, that is, the professionals. Further, in the examination, it is only the subject who goes under trial, as the examiner already possesses the knowledge that the examined is seeking (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Thus, power is weighted in favour of the professionals. This is not because of professional expertise in its own right, but rather derives from the administrative roles that professionals hold within the bureaucracy of the State. Power ultimately depends on needs and it is the State, which defines needs.

Parent/professional Partnership

The rhetoric of parent/professional partnership speaks of equality. However, in reality, professional dominance sets the agenda (Corbett, 1996), as it is the professional voice which is heard in the arenas of power where needs are defined. Parent/professional partnership can only tend to equality when the voices of parents are included, heard and listened to by those who define needs. This is no easy task, as power is sustained by needs and it is in the interests of the professional identity to uphold the needs, which maintain the status quo. Furthermore, the parental identity as inscribed by discipline includes a built in deference to professionals. In other words, parents are conditioned to listen to authority.

Sennett (1998, p. 148) writes:

“ . . . if change occurs it happens on the ground, between persons speaking out of inner need rather than through mass uprisings. What political programs follow, I simply don't know. But I do know that a regime which provides human beings with no deep reasons to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy.”

The interests of professionals lie with both the Government and the relationship between the Government and the parents. It is within the latter relationships that the possibility for change lies. Here I am suggesting that as professionals we need to rethink our conceptualisations of identity.

The State allows thought, but it is the thought of the single 'truth'. Under formal conditions this ensures that the professional and the parent alike conceptualise their distinctive identities according to the accepted norm. By making our socially constructed identities appear natural, disciplinary power makes it easier for the State to think for us:

"Because the less people take thought seriously, the more they think in conformity with what the State wants."

Deleuze and Guattari (1986, p. 44)

Nomad science allows for the thought of many 'truths'. Thought which:

"like the Vampire [] has no image, either to constitute a model of or to copy"

Deleuze and Guattari (1986, p.45).

It allows for a becoming other and the shaking off of imposed identities.

Parents and professionals need to discover these nomadic paths together, so that out of our interdependence comes an agenda of needs, which celebrates and values difference:

*"Caminante no hay camino,
Se hace camino al andar."*

*"Traveller there is no path,
Paths are made by walking."*

(Antonio Machado, quoted in Robertson, 2001, p. 126)

Reflections

From the early days of the study I had a commitment to emancipatory research and its fundamental principles of reciprocity, gain and empowerment (Page 89), and I readily adhered to the notion of a plurality of 'truths' as opposed to a 'single' truth. However, for the first two years, I found it hard to reconcile this with (a) my feelings of inferiority as a parent in a professional world and (b) the hankering for conclusion that persisted from my years of training and working as a scientist.

Whilst, I accept that the study as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, two readings stand out as the turning points that allowed for change and hence an internal reconciliation of 'thoughts' as opposed to 'thought'. The first was my reading of Mary's story in *The Culture of Pain* (Morris, 1991) (Page 17). This story voices an understanding of treatment that depends not just on the mechanics of expertise, but also on the complexities of social relationships and trust. On reading this (June 2000), my mind turned to Graeme, and I saw a now seemingly happy, confident 'normal' teenager. I reflected on how, one day, when he was eight years old, I had been told by his teacher that the most I could expect was that he would eventually learn to read labels. I realised that he now read books and magazines without a second thought. I was unexpectedly released from the feelings of guilt of having removed him from school. I was freed of my deference to expertise. I moved from invisibility to pride.

The second was the reading of a chapter by Julie Allan in *Theories of Inclusive Education* (Allan 2000). Allan describes how when half way through marking a pile of scripts, she came across one in which the student referred, not to inclusive, but to *inconclusive* education. This stimulated me

to think about *inconclusion* versus *conclusion*. I thought of how this study, like the painting on the easel in Magritte's painting (Page 25), is fixed in time. Yet, the parents have moved on, as they (like us all) are always in process. As their stories have moved on, so too has the background of their realities. I came to understand that whilst the scientist may disguise 'inconclusion' as 'conclusion based on the best information available to him/her at a specific time', it is still inconclusion. I accepted that that for which I strove was inconclusion.

The study is also inconclusive in that it has raised further questions, some of which merit consideration for future research study. For example:

- What are the perspectives of the professionals as children with dyspraxia transfer from primary to secondary school?
- What are the children's perspectives at this time?
- How will the story started in this study, unfold over the next months, years and beyond?
- Is the identity of special needs a tighter bind for boys than girls?
- What are the adult implications for children identified with special educational needs?

It is hard to conclude the inconclusive, and I leave it to the voice of a parent, who I consider says it better than any words I could string together. One who chooses to remain invisible, but who yearns to be heard:

A Poem for Professionals

Don't be afraid of us
Don't hide behind your long words, your leaflets,
Your assessments and committees
Come out from behind your forms and telephones

Listen to us, talk to us, see us, touch us.

He is my son, she is my daughter
He is your child too.

Keep your labels for your homemade wine
She is my flesh and my blood
He is my love, my destiny
Don't be afraid, he is your child too.

We know you don't have all the right answers, nor do we.
But together we can ask the right questions.
What does he need? How can we help her succeed?

Help us to ease our children into their future
Don't be afraid, he is my son, she is my daughter.

He is your child too.

Anonymous

REFERENCES

- Abberley, P. (1991) 'The significance of the OPCS disability surveys', in Oliver, M. (ed), *Social Work: disabled people and disabling environments*, London, Kingsley (Quoted in Oliver, 1995)
- Abbott, L., Dunn, S. & Morgan, V. (1999) 'Integrated Education in Northern Ireland: an analytical literature review', *DENI Research Report Series* No. 15
- Abercrombie, N. & Warde, A. (1997) 'Inequality and Selection in Education', in Giddens, A. (ed), *Sociology: introductory readings*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Acker, J., Barry, K. & Esseveld, J. (1983) 'Objectivity and Truth: Problems in Doing Feminist Research', *Women's Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 423 – 438
- Ainscow, M. (1993) 'Teacher education as a strategy for developing inclusive schools', in Slee, R. (ed), *Is There A Desk With My Name On It?: The Politics of Integration*, London, Falmer Press
- Alexander, T. (1996) 'Learning begins at home: implications for a learning society', in Bastiani, J. & Wolfendale, S. (eds), *Home-School Work in Britain: review, reflection and development*, London, David Fulton Publishers Ltd
- Alexander, J., Daly, P., Gallagher, A., Gray, C. & Sutherland, A. (1998) 'An Evaluation of the Craigavon Two-Tier System', *DENI Research Report Series* No 12
- Allan, J. (1996) 'Foucault and Special Educational Needs: a 'box of tools' for analysing children's experiences of mainstreaming', *Disability and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 219 – 233
- Allan, J. (2000) 'Reflection: Inconclusive education? Towards settled uncertainty', in Clough, P. & Corbett, J. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd
- American Psychiatric Association (1994) Category 315.40 Developmental Coordination Disorder, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (4th edn), Washington D. C., A. P. A.
- Armstrong, D. (1995) *Power and Partnership in Education*, London, Routledge
- Ayres, A. J. (1972) *Sensory Integration and Learning Disorders*, Los Angeles, Western Psychological Services

- Ayres, A. J. (1985) *Developmental Dyspraxia and Adult Onset Dyspraxia*, Torrance, Sensory Integration International
- Ball, S. J. (1991) 'Power, Conflict and Micropolitics' in Walford, G. (ed), *Doing Educational Research*, London, Routledge
- Ball, S. J. (1993) 'Self-doubt and Soft Data: Social and Technical Trajectories in Ethnographic Fieldwork', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Educational Research: Current Issues*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Barnes, C. (1992) 'Qualitative Research Valuable or Irrelevant', *Disability and Society*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 115 – 124
- Barnes, 2000, 'Reflection: a disability studies perspective', in Clough, P. & Corbett, J. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive Education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Barton, L. (1988) *The Politics of Special Educational Needs*, London, The Falmer Press
- Bastiani, J. & Wolfendale (1996) *Home-School Work in Britain*, London, David Fulton Publishers
- Bauman, Z. (1992) *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Bauman, Z. (1997) 'Thinking Sociologically', in Giddens, A. (ed), *Sociology: introductory readings*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Blamires, M., Robertson, C. & Blamires, J. (1997) *Parent-Teacher Partnership: Practical Approaches to Meet Special Educational Needs*, London, David Fulton Publishers
- Blumer, H. (1969) *Symbolic interactionism: perspective and method*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall
- Bowdery, S. (1997) 'Happy birthday, Matthew: a parents' perspective: ongoing grief when your child has a disability. Paper given to the Child Bereavement Trust Conference, Portrait of Family Grief, London (June)
- Brinberg, D. & McGrath, J.E. (1985) *Validity and the Research Process*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage
- British Educational Research Association (1992) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, Edinburgh, BERA

Brownlee, J. & Carrington, S. (2000) 'Opportunities for authentic experience and reflection: a teaching programme designed to change attitudes toward disability for pre-service teachers', *Support for Learning*, vol. 15, no 3, pp. 99 - 105

Bunting, G. & McConnell, D. (1995) 'A Northern Ireland Perspective', in Potts, P., Armstrong, F. & Masterton, M. (eds), *Learning, Teaching and Managing in Schools*, London, Routledge/Open University

Burgess, R. G. (ed) (1985) *Field Methods in the Study of Education*, London, The Falmer Press

Burt, C. (1937) *The Backward Child*, London, University of London Press

Burt, C. (1952) *The Causes and Treatment of Backwardness*, London, University of London Press

Cantell, M. H., Smyth, M. M. & Ahonen, T. P. (1994) 'Clumsiness in adolescence: educational, motor and social outcomes of motor delay detected at 5 years', *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, vol.11, no. 2, pp. 115 - 129

Cardon, L. R., Smith, S. D., Fulker, D. W., Kimberling, W. J., Pennington, B. F. and DeFries, J. C. (1994) 'Quantitative trait locus for reading disability on chromosome 6', *Science*, 265, p.p. 278 - 279

Carpenter, B. (2000) 'Sustaining the family: Meeting the needs of families of children with disabilities', *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 27, No. 23, p.p. 135 - 142.

Cermak, S. A. (1985) 'Developmental Dyspraxia', in Roy, E. A. (ed), *Neurophysiological Studies of Apraxia and Related Disorders*, Amsterdam, North Holland

Chandler, J. (1997) 'Women Outside Marriage', in Giddens, A. (ed), *Sociology: introductory readings*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Chapman, C. (1996) 'Empowering pupils through home-school links', in Basiani, J. & Wolfendale, S. (eds), *Home-School Work in Britain*, London, David Fulton Publishers Ltd.

Chesson, R., McKay, C. & Stephenson, E. (1990) 'Motor Learning Difficulties and the Family', *Child Care Health and Development*, vol. 16, pp. 123 - 138

Chia, S.H. (1995) 'Do they grow out of it? Assessment and Management of Developmental Dyspraxia', *Child Health*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 196 - 199

Chia, S. H. (1999) 'The child, his family and dyspraxia', *Midline*, no. 28 spring, pp. 10 – 13

Cixous, H. (1994) *Hélène Cixous: Reader*, London, Routledge

Clough, P. (2000) 'Routes to Inclusion', in Clough, P. & Corbett, J. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive Education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Collins, R. (1994) *Four Sociological Readings*, New York, Oxford University Press

Conrad, K. E., Cermak, S. A. (1983) 'Differentiation of Praxis Among Children', *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, vol. 37, pp. 466 – 473

Corbett, J. (1993) 'Postmodernism and the 'Special Needs' metaphors', *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 547 – 556

Corbett, J. (1996) *Bad Mouthing*, London, Falmer Press

Corbett, J. (1998) *Special Educational Needs in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Analysis*, Cassell, London

Corbett, J. (2000) in Corbett, J. & Clough, P. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive Education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Corker, M. (2000) in Corbett, J. & Clough, P. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive Education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) (1999) *Specifications for the 1999/2000 Transfer Tests*, Belfast, CCEA

Dahlstrom, E. (1989) 'Theories and ideology of family function, gender relations and human reproduction', in Boh, K., Back, M., Clason, C., Pankratora, M., Qvortup, J., Sgritta, B. G. & Aerness, K. (eds), *Changing Patterns of European Family Life*, London, Routledge

David, T. (1994) *Working Together for Young Children: Multi-professionalism in Action*, London, Routledge

David, T. & Nurse, A. (1999) 'Inspection of under fives' education and constructions of childhood' in David, T. (ed) *Teaching Young Children*, p.p. 165 – 184, London, PCP/Sage

De Ajuriaguerra, J. & Stambak, M. (1969) 'Developmental Dyspraxia and Psychomotor Disorders', in Vinken, P. J. & Bruyn, G. W. (eds), *Handbook of Clinical Neurology*, Amsterdam, North Holland

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1986) *Nomadology: The War Machine*, New York, Semiotext(e)

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1988) *A Thousand Plateaux*, London, Athlone

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1994) *Information Brief on Education in Northern Ireland* available from Co-ordination Branch, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor BT19 7PR

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1996) 'Extract of Speech by Education Minister, Michael Ancram, to the Annual Conference of the Association of Education and Library Boards On 4 October', *Circular 1996/40*, p.9

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1997) *Special Educational Needs, A Guide for Parents*, available from Education and Library Boards

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1998a) *Examination of Practice in Mainstream Schools for Children with Special Educational Needs*, Bangor, DENI

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1998b) *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*, Bangor, DENI

Dewey, D., Roy, E. A., Square-Storer, P. A. & Hayden, D. (1988) 'Limb and oral praxic abilities in children with verbal sequencing difficulties', *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, vol. 30, pp. 743 – 751

Duff, C. (1999) *Stepping through the Eye of Power: Foucault, Limits and the Construction of Masculinity* [online], <http://www.qut.edu.au/edu/cpol/foucault/duff.html> (accessed 24 March 2001)

Dunst, C., Trivette, C. & Deal, A. (1988) *Enabling & Empowering Families: Principles and Guidelines for Practice*, Cambridge, MA, Brookline Books

Dunst, C., Trivette, C. M. & Deal, A. C. (1994) *Supporting & Strengthening Families: Methods, Strategies and Practices*, Cambridge, MA, Brookline Books

Dyspraxia Foundation (1999) *Midline*, no. 28, spring, p.29

Edwards, A.D. & Furlong, J.D. (1983) 'Reflections on The Language of Teaching', in Burgess, R.G. (ed), *Field Methods in the Study of Education*, Lewes, The Falmer Press

Eisner, E. (1993) 'Objectivity and Educational Research', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Educational Research: Current Issues*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing

Emerson, J. (1970) 'Behaviour in private places; sustaining definitions of reality in gynaecological examinations', in Dreitzel, H. P. (ed), *Recent Sociology* 2, New York, Macmillan

Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Farren, S. (1995) *The Politics of Irish Education (1920 – 1965)*, Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast

Fawcett, A. J., Nicholson, R. I. (1994) 'Persistent deficits in motor skill of children with dyslexia', *Journal Motor Behavior*, vol. 27, pp. 235 – 239

Fawcett, A.J., Nicholson, R. I. & Dean, P. (1996) 'Impaired Performance of Children with Dyslexia in a range of cerebellar tasks', *Annals of Dyslexia*, vol. 46, pp. 259 – 283

Ferguson, P. M., Ferguson, D. & Taylor, S. J. (1992) *Interpreting Disability: a qualitative reader*, New York, Teachers College Press

Ford, J. (1975) *Paradigms and Fairy Tales*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul

Foucault, M. (1963) 'Distance, aspect, origine', *Critique*, November, pp. 20 – 22, cited in Bellour, R. (1992) 'Towards Fiction' in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, London, Routledge (translated by T. J. Armstrong)

Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London, Tavistock

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, Harmondsworth, Penguin

Foucault, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish*, New York, Vantage Books

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 - 1977*, London, Harvester Press

Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power', in Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow, P. (eds), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press (quoted in Rabinow (1984))

Foucault, M. (1984a) 'Panopticism', in Rabinow, P. (ed), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, London, Penguin

Foucault, M. (1984b) 'Truth and Power', in Rabinow, P. (ed), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, London, Penguin

Foucault, M. (1984c) 'What is Enlightenment', in Rabinow, P. (ed), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, London, Penguin

Foucault, M. (1984d) 'The Means of Correct Training', in Rabinow, P. (ed), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, London, Penguin

Fox, A.M. (1998) 'Clumsiness in Children', unpublished paper Faculty of Medicine, University of Western Ontario

Fox, N. J. (1993) *Postmodernism, Sociology and Health*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Freilich, M. (ed) (1977, 2nd edition) *Marginal Natives at Work, Anthropologists in the Field*, New York, Wiley quoted in Burgess (1985, p. 3)

Freund, J. (1972) *The Sociology of Max Weber*, Harmondsworth, Penguin

Gallagher, A. M. (1997) 'Educational achievement and gender: a review of research evidence on the apparent underachievement of boys', *Research Report No. 6*, Bangor, DENI

Gallagher, A (2000) '*Comparative perspectives on School Systems*', Bangor, DENI

Gallagher, A. M., Cormack, R. J. and Osborne, R. D. (1994) 'Religion, equity and education in Northern Ireland', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 507 –518

Gallagher, A. & Smith, A. (2000) '*The Effects Of The Selective System Of Secondary Education in Northern Ireland*', Bangor, DENI

Garner, P. & Sandow, S. (1995) 'The Context for Advocacy and Self-Advocacy', in Garner, P. & Sandow, S. (eds), *Advocacy, Self-Advocacy and Special Needs*, London, David Fulton Publishers

Gartrell, B. (1979) 'Is ethnography possible? A critique of African odyssey', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 426 - 446

Gasgoigne, E. (1995) *Working with Parents as partners in SEN*, London, David Fulton

Gibson, R. C. (1996) 'The effects of dyspraxia on family relationships', *British Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, February 1996, vol.3, no. 2, p.p. 101 - 105

Giddens, A. (1976) *Central Problems in Social Theory*, London, Hutchinson

Giddens, A. (1997) 'Sociology and the Explanation of Human Behaviour', in Giddens, A. (ed), *Sociology Introductory Readings*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Gillberg, I. C., Gillberg, C. & Groth, J. (1989) 'Children with pre-school Minor Neurodevelopmental Disorders. V: Neurodevelopmental Profiles at Age 13' *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, vol. 31, pp.14 – 24

Gitlin, A., Siegal, M. & Boru, K. (1993) 'The politics of Method: From Leftist Ethnography to Educative Research', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Education Research: Current Issues*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Glaser, G. B. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson

Goddard, S. (1996) *A Teacher's Window into the Child's Mind*, Eugene, Oregon, Fern Ridge Press

Goddard Blythe, S. (2000) 'Early learning in the balance: priming the first ABC', *Support for Learning British Journal of Learning Support*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Nov. 2000, p.p. 154 - 158

Goffman, E. (1963) *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall

Goffman, E. (1969) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Hammondsworth, Penguin

Goleman, D. (1998) *Vital Lies, Simple Truths: The Psychology of Self-Deception*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Gorard, S. (1997) 'Parents, children and school choice', *Working Paper 26*, Cardiff, Cardiff University of Wales

Gordon, N. & McKinlay, I. (1980) *Helping Clumsy Children*, New York, Churchill Livingstone

Gorelick, S. (1991) 'Contradictions of feminist methodology, *Gender and Society*, vol. 5, no. 4., pp. 459 – 477

Griffin, R. G. (1985) 'Qualitative Methods and Cultural Analysis: Young Women and the Transition from School to Un/employment', in Burgess, R. G. (ed), *Field Methods in the Study of Education*, London, The Falmer Press

Gubbay, S. S. (1975a) *The Clumsy Child*, London, Saunders

Gubbay, S. S. (1975b) 'Clumsy Children in Normal Schools', *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol.1, pp. 233 – 236

Gubbay, S. S. (1978) 'The management of developmental apraxia', *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, vol. 20, pp. 643 - 646

Gubbay, S. S., Ellis, E., Walton, J. N. & Court, S.D. (1965) 'Clumsy Children: A Study of Apraxic and Agnostic Defects in 21 Children, *Brain*, vol. 88, pp. 295 – 312

Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography?*, London, Routledge

Hammersley, M. (1993) 'On the teacher as researcher', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Education Research Current Issues*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Harvey, L. (1990) *Critical Social Research*, London, Unwin Hyman

Hastings, R. P. (1997) 'Grandparents of children with disabilities; a review', *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 329 – 340

Hastrup, K. (1992) 'Writing ethnography: State of the art', in Okely, K. & Callaway, H. (eds), *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London, Routledge

Heath, C. (1997) 'Embarrassment and Interactional Organization', in Giddens, A. (ed), *Sociology: introductory readings*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Hellgren, L., Gillberg, I. C., Bagenholm, A. & Gillberg, C. (1994) 'Children with deficits in attention, motor control and perception (DAMP) almost grown up: psychiatric and personality disorders at age 16 years', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 37, no.7, pp. 1255 – 1271

Henderson, S. E. & Hall, D. M .B. (1982) 'Concomitants of Clumsiness in Young School Children', *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, vol. 24, pp. 448 – 460

Hulme, C. & Lorde, K. (1986) 'Clumsy Children: a review of recent research', *Child Care, Health and Development*, vol.12, pp. 247 – 269.

Jenks, W. J. (1997) '*The Problematics of Postmodern Culture within Disciplinary Liberalism: The Norplant Case*' [online], <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/css97/papers/jenkspsp.html> (Accessed 24 March 2001)

Johnson, P. (1999) 'Down to Real Business', *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 November, p.1

Johnstone, O. (1987) 'Poorly co-ordinated children; a survey of 95 cases', *Child Care, Health and Development*, vol. 13, pp. 361 – 376

Kalverboer, A. F., Vries, H. de & Dellen, T. van (1990) 'Social behavior in clumsy children as rated by parents and teachers', in Kalverboer, A (ed), *Developmental Bio-psychology: Experimental and observational studies in children at risk*, University of Michigan Press, Detroit

Kelly, E. (1991) 'Entitlement for all, race, gender and ERA', *Multicultural Teaching*, vol.10, no. 1, pp. 17 – 22

Lather, P. (1987) 'Research as Praxis', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 56, pp. 257 – 253 (Quoted in The Open University, 1995, p. 58)

Levine, M. D. & Satz, P. (1984) *Middle Childhood: Development and Dysfunction*, Baltimore, University Park Press

Lifton, R. J. (1967) *Death in Life*, New York, Basic Books

Losse, A., Henderson, S. E., Elliman, D., Hall, D., Knight, E. & Jongmans, M. (1991), 'Clumsiness in Children – Do They Grow Out Of It? A 10-Year Follow-Up Study', *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, vol. 33, pp. 35 – 68

Low, J. (1996) 'Negotiating Identities, Negotiating Environments: an interpretation of the experiences of students with disabilities', *Disability & Society*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 235 – 248

Lyotard, J. (1982) 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) translated by Bennington, G. & Massumi, B., Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press

Maclachlan, K. (1996) 'Good mothers are women too: the gender implications of parental involvement in education', in Bastiani, J. & Wolfendale, S. (eds),

Home-School Work in Britain: review, reflection and development, London, David Fulton Publishers Ltd

MaClure, M. (2000) 'Dicing with Derrida. Deconstruction for/against Qualitative Research', paper presented to a conference 'Current Issues in Qualitative Research', Centre for Applied Education in Research in Education, University of East Anglia, Norwich 24 – 25 July 2000

MacPherson (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry*, London, HMSO

Magritte, R. (1938) 'La Ligne de vie', in *Scrutenaire, Avec Magritte*

Maslow, A. (1954) *Motivation and Personality*, New York, Harper & Row

Maxwell, J. (1992) 'Understanding and Validity in Quantitative Research', *Harvard Education Review*, vol. 62, no. 3, pp. 279 - 300

McCourt, F. (2000) *'Tis*, London, Flamingo

McGuinness, M. (2001) 'Parents Challenge School Rule', *Belfast Telegraph*, p. 1

McHoul & Grace (1993) *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, power and the subject*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press

McPhillips, M., Hepper, P. G. & Mulhern, G. (2000) 'Effects of replicating primary-reflex movements on specific reading difficulties in children: a randomised, double-blind, controlled trial', *The Lancet*, vol. 355, February 12, 2000, p.p.537 - 541

Mead, G. H., (1997) 'Self and Society' in Giddens, A. (ed), Cambridge, Polity Press

Measor, L. (1985) 'Interviewing: a Strategy in Qualitative Research' in Burgess, R. G. (ed) *Strategies of Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, London, The Falmer Press

Mental Health Foundation (1997) *Don't Forget Us: Children with Learning Disabilities and Severe Challenging Behaviour*, London, Mental Health Foundation

Miles, T.R. & Miles, E. (1999, 2nd edn) *Dyslexia a hundred years on*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Millar, N. (1986) *Dyspraxia and its Management*, Kent, Croom Helm

- Mills, C. W. (1956) *The Power Elite*, New York, Oxford University Press
- Mills, C. W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, New York, Oxford University Press
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E. & Alexander, L. (1995, 2nd Edition) *In-Depth Interviewing*, Sydney, Longman
- Mirfin-Veitch, B. & Bray, A. (1997) 'Grandparents – the supporting role' in Carpenter, B. (ed), *Families in Context: Emerging Trends in Family Support Early Intervention*, London, David Fulton
- Missiuna, C. (1994) 'Keeping current in Developmental Coordination disorder', *Keeping Current* 94 – 2, Neurodevelopmental Clinical Research Unit, McMaster University
- Missiuna, C., Kempton, K. & O'Leary, C. (1994) *Developmental Coordination Disorder: A reconciliation of Terms*, Unpublished manuscript
- Missiuna, C. & Polatajko, H. (1994), *Developmental Dyspraxia by Any Other Name*, Roundtable Discussion at the Combined Annual Conference of the American Occupational therapy Association and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, Boston
- Missiuna, C. & Polatajko, H. (1995) 'Developmental Dyspraxia by Any Other Name: Are They All Just Clumsy Children?' *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, vol. 49, pp. 619 – 627
- Mittler, P. (2000) in Corbett, J. & Clough, P. (eds), *Theories of Inclusive Education: A Students' Guide*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing
- Morris, D.B. (1991) *The Culture of Pain*, Berkeley, University of California Press
- Morris, J. (1995) 'Personal and political: a feminist perspective on researching physical disability', in Potts, P., Armstrong, F. & Masterton M. (eds), *Equality and Diversity in Education 2: National and International Contexts*, London, Routledge
- Morrison, M. C. (1998) *Let Evening Come: Reflections on Ageing*, London, Transworld Publishers Ltd.

Nias, J. (1991) 'Primary Teachers Talking: A Reflexive Account of Longitudinal Research', in Walford, G. (ed), *Doing Educational Research*, London, Routledge

Nias, J. (1993) 'Primary Teachers Talking: A Reflexive Account of Longitudinal Research', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Educational Research: current issues*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing

Norwich, B. (1999) 'The connotation of special education labels for professionals in the field' *British Journal of Special Education*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 179 - 183

Oliver, M. (1990) *The Politics of Disablement*, Basingstoke, Mcmillan

Oliver, M. (1991) Seminar Paper, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Oliver, M. (1992) 'Changing the social relations of research production?', *Disability, Handicap and Society*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 101 - 114

Oliver, M. (1995) 'Changing the Social Relations of Research Production', *E829 Developing Inclusive Curricula: Equality and Diversity in Education*, Open University

Oliver, M. & Barnes, C. (1998) *Disabled People and Social Policy*, Harlow, Addison Wesley Longman Ltd

Parlett, M. & Hamilton, D. (1977) 'Evaluation as illumination', in Hamilton, D. et al (eds), *Beyond the Numbers Game*, London, Macmillan Education

Penso, D. E. (1993) *Perceptuomotor Difficulties*, London, Chapman & Hall

Peshkin, A. (1988) 'In Search of Subjectivity - One's Own', *Educational Researcher*, vol. 17, no. 7, p.p. 17 -21

Polley, S. (2000) 'There must be a better way of preparing our young people for life', *The Larne Times*, 10 February, p. 9

Portwood, M.(1999) *Developmental Dyspraxia: Identification and Intervention. A Manual for Parents and Professionals*, London, David Fulton Publishers

Potts, P., Armstrong, F. & Masterton, M. (1995) *Equality and Diversity in Education 2: National and International Contexts*, London, Routledge

Rabinow, P. (1984) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, London, Penguin

Rabinow, P. (1994) *Michel Foucault Ethics: the essential works 1*, London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press

Reason, R., Farrell, P. & Mittler, P. (1990) 'Changes in assessment', in Entwistle, N. (ed), *Handbook of Educational Ideas and Practices*, London, Routledge

Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing Strategies: Reaching diverse audiences*, London, Sage

Richardson, L. (1993) Poetics, Dramatics, and Transgressive Validity: The Case of the Skipped Line, *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 695 – 710

Robertson, C. (2001) 'Autonomy and identity: the need for new dialogues in education and welfare', *Support for Learning*, vol.16, no. 3, pp. 122 – 127

Roll, J. (1991) *What is a Family*, London, FPSC

Rowan, J. (1981) 'A dialectical paradigm for research', in Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (eds), *Human Inquiry: a sourcebook of new paradigm research*, Chichester, John Wiley

Ryan, J. & Thomas, F. (1987, revised edn) *The Politics of Mental Handicap*, London, Free Association Books

Schmahmann, J. D. & Sherman, J. C. (1998) 'The Cerebellar Cognitive Affective Syndrome', *Brain*, vol. 121, pp. 561 – 579

Schostak, J.F. (1996) *Chez Sade: what's cooking tonight? Soul Murder, replied the Judge: Some draft notes about collaboration between consenting partners* [online], <http://www.uea.ac.uk/care/elu/Issues/Culture/Cult2.html> (accessed 15 September 2000)

Schostak, J. F. (2000a) *Modernism, Post-Modernism: the Curriculum of Surfaces* [online], <http://www.uea.ac.uk/care/elu/Issues/Education/Ed3.html> (accessed 15 September 2000)

Schostak, J. F. (2000b) *Fantasies of Truth and Change: Methodology on the couch*, University of East Anglia, CARE

Schwandt, T. (1996) 'Notes on being an interpretivist ' in Heshasings, L. & Ballard, K. (eds), *From Positivism to Interpretivism and Beyond*, New York, Teachers College Press

- Sears, J. (1992) Researching the other/searching for self: qualitative research on (homo)sexuality in education, *Theory Into Practice*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp.147 – 156
- Seidman, S. (1994) *Contested Knowledge*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Sennett, R. (1998) *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, New York, Norton
- Shepherdson, C. (2001) *Postmodern Culture* [online],
<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.195/shepherd.195> (accessed 15 June 2001)
- Sikes, P., Measor, L. & Woods, P. (1985) *Teacher Careers: Crises and Continuities*, Lewes, Falmer Press
- Silva, P. A. & Ross, B. (1980) 'Gross motor development and delays in development in early childhood: assessment and significance', *Journal of Human Movement Studies*, vol. 6, pp. 211 – 226
- Slater, M. K. (1976) *African odyssey: an anthropological adventure*, Anchor, New York
- Smith, D. (1977, 2nd edn) 'Some Implications of a Sociology for Women', in Glazer, N. & Waehler, H. (eds), *Woman in a Man-Made World: A Socio-economic Handbook* Chicago, Rand McNally
- Smith, D. (1988) *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, The Open University Press, Milton Keynes
- Smith, J. (1997) 'Being a Parent', in Lumbrick, P. (ed), *Who Supports the Parents? : Five Year Review for Parents, Professionals and Funders*, Todmorden, W. Yorkshire, One Hundred Hours
- Smith, S. D., Kimberling, W. J., Pennington, B. F. & Lubs, H. A. (1983) 'Specific reading disability: identification of an inherited form through linkage analysis', *Science*, vol. 219, pp.1345 – 1347
- Smith, S. D., Kimberling, W. J. & Pennington, B. F. (1991) 'Screening for multiple genes influencing dyslexia' in Pennington, B. F. (ed) *Reading Disabilities: Genetic and Neurological Influences*, Dordrecht, Kluwer
- Sparkes, A. C. (1994) 'Life histories and the issue of voice: reflections on an emerging relationship', *Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp.165 – 183

Sparkes, A. C. (1995) 'Writing People: Reflections on the Dual Crisis of Representation and Legitimation in Qualitative Inquiry', *National Association for Physical Education in Qualitative Inquiry*, Quest, vol. 47, pp. 158-159

Spencer, P. (1997) "*From Morphine to Milk of Magnesia*", University of East Anglia, Unpublished PhD Thesis

Stackhouse, J. & Snowling, M. (1992) 'Developmental verbal dyspraxia II: A developmental perspective on two case studies', *European Journal of Disorders of Communication*, 27, pp. 35 - 54

Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case study Research*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage

Stake, R. & Turnbull, D. (1982) Naturalistic Generalisations, *Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 1 - 12

Strathern, M. (2000) 'The tyranny of transparency', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 26. no. 3, pp. 309 - 321

Strauss, A. A. & Lehtinen, L. E. (1987) *Psychopathology and education of the brain impaired child*, New York, Grune & Stratton

Stenhouse, L. (1978) 'Case study and case records: towards a contemporary history of education', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol.4, pp. 21 - 39

Sugden, D. & Waters, C. (1983) *Children with Movement Problems*, School of Education, University of Leeds

The Open University (1992a) E242 *Learning for All*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1992b) E806 *Applied Studies in Learning Difficulties in Education*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1992c) E242 *Learning for All*, Unit 8/9, *Difference and Distinction*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1992d) E242 *Learning for All*, Unit 1/2, *Making Connections*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1992e) E242 *Learning for All*, Unit 11/12, *Happy Memories*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1992f) E242 *Learning for All*, Unit 3/4, *Learning from Experience*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1994) E824 *Educational Research Methods Study Guide*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1995) E829 *Developing Inclusive Curricula: Equality and Diversity in Education*, Project Guide, Milton Keynes, The Open University

The Open University (1996) E835: *Educational Research in Action*, Milton Keynes, The Open University

Tomlinson, S. (1982) *A Sociology of Special Education*, London, Routledge

Torney, K. (2000) 'Your schools and me – by Martin McGuinness', *Belfast Telegraph*, 12 January, p. 7

Von Wright, G. (1971) *Explanation and Understanding*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul (Quoted in Stake (1995) p. 38)

Vulliamy, G. & Webb, R. (1995) 'Special educational needs: from disciplinary to pedagogic research' in Potts, P., Armstrong, F. & Masterton, M. (eds), *Equality and Diversity in Education National and International Contexts*, London, Routledge

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press

Walker, J. (1995) 'Parenting in the 1990s: Great Expectations and Hard Times', *RSA Journal*, January/February, pp. 29 – 40

Walker, R. (1981) 'Three Good Reasons for Not Doing Educational Research', Paper written for British Educational Research Association Conference

Walker, R. (1987) 'Techniques for Research', in Murphy, R. & Torrance, H. (eds), *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd

Warm, D. D., Baillie, S. H., & Warm, D. L. (1994) 'An Exploratory Study of the Pattern of Pupil Recruitment to an Integrated School', Coleraine, University of Ulster

Watson, J. (2000) 'Constructive instruction and learning difficulties', *Support for Learning*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 134 – 140.

White, S. (1991) *Political Theory and Postmodernism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

- Wedell, K. (1985) 'Foreword', in Hegarty, S. & Evans, P. (eds), *Research and Evaluation Methods in Special Education*, London, NFER-Nelson
- West, A. (1994) 'Choosing Schools – the Consumers' Perspective', in Halstead, J. M. (eds), *Parental Choice in Education*, London, Kogan Page Ltd
- West, A., David, M., Hailes, J. & Ribbens, J. (1995) 'Parents in the Process of Choosing Secondary Schools: Implications for Schools', *Educational Management and Administration*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 28 – 38
- Whitfield, S. (1992) *Magritte*, London, South Bank Center
- Whyte, J. (1990) *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford, Clarendon Press
- Winton, R. (1990) *Report of the New Mexico Home Memorial 5 Task Force on Young Children and Families* (Report 1), New Mexico, New Mexico Home Memorial 5 Task Force on Young Children and Families
- Wolfendale, S. (1997) 'Delivering services for children with special needs', in Wolfendale, S. (ed), *Working With Parents of SEN Children After the Code of Practice*, London, David Fulton Publishers
- Woods, P. (1985) 'Ethnography and Theory Construction in Educational Research', in Burgess, R. G. (ed), *Field Methods in the Study of Education*, London, The Falmer Press
- Yin, R.K. (1994) *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, California, Sage

- Wedell, K. (1985) 'Foreword', in Hegarty, S. & Evans, P. (eds), *Research and Evaluation Methods in Special Education*, London, NFER-Nelson
- West, A. (1994) 'Choosing Schools – the Consumers' Perspective', in Halstead, J. M. (eds), *Parental Choice in Education*, London, Kogan Page Ltd
- West, A., David, M., Hailes, J. & Ribbens, J. (1995) 'Parents in the Process of Choosing Secondary Schools: Implications for Schools', *Educational Management and Administration*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 28 – 38
- Whitfield, S. (1992) *Magritte*, London, South Bank Center
- Whyte, J. (1990) *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford, Clarendon Press
- Winton, R. (1990) *Report of the New Mexico Home Memorial 5 Task Force on Young Children and Families* (Report 1), New Mexico, New Mexico Home Memorial 5 Task Force on Young Children and Families
- Wolfendale, S. (1997) 'Delivering services for children with special needs', in Wolfendale, S. (ed), *Working With Parents of SEN Children After the Code of Practice*, London, David Fulton Publishers
- Woods, P. (1985) 'Ethnography and Theory Construction in Educational Research', in Burgess, R. G. (ed), *Field Methods in the Study of Education*, London, The Falmer Press
- Yin, R.K. (1994) *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, California, Sage

LIST OF APPENDICES

		Page
1.1	Statutory Framework for Education in N.Ireland	204
1.2	Education and Library Boards	204
1.3	School Categories and Compulsory School Ages	205
1.4	The Transfer Tests	207
1.5	Admission Criteria	207
1.6	The Transfer Report Form	208
1.7	Special Arrangements within the Transfer Procedure	209
	Tests	
2.1	Primary Reflexes	210
2.2	Specific Learning Difficulties: – Code of Practice	210
	N.I. (1998)	
4.1	Example Interview Notes and Analysis	212
5.1	Random Example of Local Newspaper Coverage of Open Days/Nights 2000	213

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1

The Statutory Framework for Education in Northern Ireland

The Primary Legislation for education in Northern Ireland is:

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986; S. I. 1986 No. 594 (N. I. 3)

The Education (NI) Order 1987 S. I. 1987; No. 167 (N. I. 2)

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 No. 2406 (N. I. 20)

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993 No. 2810 (N. I. 12)

The Education (NI) Order 1996; S.I. 1996 No. 274 (N.I. 1)

The Education (NI) Order 1997; S.I. 1997 No. 866 (N. I. 5)

Appendix 1.2

Education and Library Boards

There are five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland:

- Belfast Education and Library Board
- South-Eastern Education and Library Board
- Southern Education and Library Board
- Western Education and Library Board
- North-Eastern Education and Library Board

Each Board is the local education authority for its area. The membership of each Board is made up of District Councillors, representatives of transferors of schools (the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist

Church, which transferred most of their schools to the State), representatives of trustees of maintained schools and other interested persons.

The role of the Boards is to provide practical and advisory assistance to schools and colleges. Their duties include the provision of sufficient schools of all kinds to meet the needs of their areas; full responsibility for the schools under their management; the identification and provision for children with special educational needs and the provision of clearing house facilities for secondary school placements. Board expenditure is fully funded by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI)

Appendix 1.3

School Categories and Compulsory School Ages

The Northern Ireland education system provides free education for all children of compulsory school age (4 to 16 years) and also for those who choose to stay at school until they are eighteen. Nursery schools cater for children aged between 3 and 4, and primary schools for children between the ages of 4 and 11. The lower limit of compulsory school age requires that a child who reaches the age of 4 by 1st July should start school on 1st September of that year. If there is a surplus of places, children who have not reached the compulsory age may be enrolled. Secondary schools (including grammar schools) provide for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16/18.

Education in Northern Ireland is broadly organised along similar lines to England and Wales. However there are some significant differences. Secondary education is largely selective on the basis of academic ability. There is also a large voluntary school sector, which is mainly made up of Catholic maintained schools and voluntary grammar schools. A large rural school sector (mostly small primary schools) caters for local communities.

There are six categories of school:

1. **Controlled:** These are managed by the Education and Library Boards through Boards of Governors. Running costs are fully met under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements, which are administered by the Education and Library Boards.
2. **Voluntary Maintained:** These are managed by Boards of Governors. Running costs are fully met under the LMS arrangements and administered by the Education and Library Boards.
3. **Voluntary Grammar:** Only grammar schools are permitted to select pupils on the basis of academic ability. All grammar schools cater for pupils from 11 to 18 years of age and the emphasis is on preparing pupils for higher education. Management is by Boards of Governors. Running costs are funded through LMS funding, which is administered by DENI. DENI also pays up to 85% of approved capital expenditure. Thus apart from a small capital fee, education is free. A small number of voluntary grammar schools offer boarding accommodation.
4. **New Category of Voluntary School:** Introduced in 1993, this allows existing voluntary maintained schools and voluntary grammar schools to opt for 100% capital grant. This option entails a change in the make-up of the Board of Governors so that no single interest group holds a majority position.
5. **Integrated:** The aim of these schools is the provision of education for Roman Catholic and Protestant children together. Parent groups make initial proposals for these schools. Once they have enrolled sufficient numbers of Protestants and Catholic pupils, DENI considers the granting of funding. This amounts to 100% grants for approved running costs and capital

expenditure.

6. **Independent Schools:** There are a few independent and private schools. They cater for a very small proportion of the pupil population and receive no financial assistance from State funds.
-

Appendix 1.4

The Transfer Tests

The Transfer Tests are administered and marked by the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The programmes of study cover English, mathematics, and science and technology. Irish replaces English in Irish-medium schools.

The main tests are administered two weeks apart during the autumn school term. There is a supplementary test in December for pupils, who through illness or some other reason miss one of the tests. The tests last for one hour.

Children need only be entered for the tests if their parents wish them to be considered for a grammar school place.

Pupils for whom an Education and Library Board are maintaining statements of educational needs should not sit the Transfer Tests.

Appendix 1.5

Admissions Criteria

Boards of Governors are required under Article 16 of The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to draw up criteria to be applied in selecting pupils for admission to secondary schools. Criteria do not have to be approved by DENI,

but may not include the outcome of Key Stage 2 assessments or take account of a primary school's comments about a pupil, except in cases of special circumstances. Only grammar schools can include reference to ability or aptitude and schools are legally prohibited from applying their own tests at the normal age of transfer. Criteria only comes into play if a school is oversubscribed.

Printed details of the admissions criteria for all post-primary schools in a Board's area is given to the parents of each child in the Transfer year. Copies are available from each Board on request.

Appendix: 1.6

The Transfer Report Form

A Transfer Report form is completed by the principal of the primary school for each pupil who is transferring to secondary school. It is on the information provided on this form that schools base their decisions on which pupils to admit.

After the issue of the Transfer Test results, parents (except those of statemented children) are invited to express on the Transfer Report form, their preferences for the secondary schools for which they wish their child to be considered. The Education and Library Boards advise principals to advise parents to include information of special circumstances that the parent might want taken into account by the selecting school. However, the legal obligation to provide such information rests with the parents and not the primary school principals. Completed forms are returned to the appropriate Education and Library Board, which in turn sends the forms to the secondary schools for consideration.

Appendix 1.7

Special Circumstances within the Transfer Procedure Tests

No allowance is made within the marking of the Transfer Tests for a pupil who ill or affected in any other way.

If a child misses one of the tests through illness or other adverse circumstances s/he is given the opportunity to sit the supplementary test in December. If this is taken up the alleged affected test will be disregarded, and the child's grade based on the results of the unaffected test and the supplementary test. If the offer of the supplementary test is not taken up, the alleged affected test result stands.

If there is a long term or underlying, social, medical or any other problem the grade from the two tests stands. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the grammar schools, using the Transfer Report Form of any long-term special circumstances. It is then up to the Board of Governors of the selected school to decide on whether or not the pupil should be admitted.

Appendix 2.1

Primary (Primitive) Reflexes

When a child is born s/he leaves the cushioning and protection of the womb and enters a world in which he/she meets with an enormous amount and range of sensory stimuli. In order to survive nature provides the newborn with a set of primitive reflexes, which ensure immediate response to the new environment. These reflexes are automatic and stereotyped movements, without which a child could not survive the first weeks of life. However, as the child develops these should be controlled or inhibited by higher centres of the brain, which allows for more sophisticated and controlled movement. If these reflexes remain after six to twelve months, they are considered indicative of a structural weakness or immaturity in the central nervous system.

Reference:

Goddard, S. (1996), *A Teacher's Window Into the Child's Mind*, Oregon, Fern Ridge Press

Appendix: 2.2

Specific Learning Difficulties – Code of Practice (NI) (1998)

A.6 Some children may have significant difficulties in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers, which are not typical of their general level of performance, especially in other areas of the curriculum. They may gain some skills in some subjects quickly and demonstrate a high level of ability orally, yet may encounter sustained difficulty in gaining literacy or numeracy skills. Such children can become severely frustrated and may also have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The Child's Learning Difficulty

A.7 The Board should seek clear, recorded evidence of the child's academic attainment and ask, for example, whether:

- I. there are significant discrepancies between attainment in different programmes of study of the Northern Ireland Curriculum or within one programme of study. Boards should be especially alert if there is evidence that, in English, a child has attained average or high levels in speaking and listening, but significantly lower levels in reading and/or writing;
- II. expectations of the child, as indicated by a consensus among those who have taught and closely observed him or her, supported, as appropriate, by appropriately administered standardised tests of cognitive ability or oral comprehension, are significantly above his or her attainments in Northern Ireland Curriculum assessments and tests and/or the results of appropriately administered standardised reading, spelling or mathematics tests;
- III. there is clear, recorded evidence of clumsiness; significant difficulties of sequencing or visual perception; deficiencies in working memory; or significant delays in language functioning;
- IV. there is clear evidence of problems sometimes associated with specific learning difficulties, such as severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, as indicated by clear, recorded examples of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour, an inability to concentrate or to organise his or her work, or signs that the child experiences considerable frustration or distress in relation to his or her learning difficulties. Boards should be particularly alert if there is evidence of such difficulties in some classes or tasks such as reading or writing, but not in others.

(pp. 43 – 44)

Department of Education Northern Ireland (1998b) *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*, Bangor, Northern Ireland

Appendix 4.1 Example of Interview Notes and Analysis

VALERIE "OK I suppose. I'm always chasing my tail. It takes so long to get into Belfast. **NATHAN**'s such a hand full. I'm worn out. Sometimes I feel like running away. I won't but I do. Hard not to. Remember when you were here last time and I said that Nathan was getting on OK. I thought he was. Suppose I'm just too busy. Not giving up my work though. Roy would like me to. Well, I think he would. Not that he'd admit it. After you'd gone his Granny said that he wasn't. I couldn't stop thinking about it and I got really angry with myself when I caught on."

Stress!!
Disband with Roy see p. 88
* Business of life. Ty Woldendale (Yellow Box) Family concerns.
Reliance on money.
MEASOR. NOTES. Thinking + rethinking.**Labels.**
See notes on interview with Caroline. Called A Team.
I AGREE.
+ YES I DO
(Feel angry about this)
CARE!! Judging.

Responsibility
Conflict of identities
See Valerie's Ref to GOSIE and need to work for money
Why was that?
GUILT??
Emotional ? to do with dyspraxia. ? just family life
NOT REPENDENT VALIDATION
How's that?
"Well he wouldn't speak to me when I was going to work on Thursday mornings. He's huffy about things many a morning. I just can't keep up. Need to be a referee and a mind reader. Mum was the one to realise. Then it dawned on me. The others were doing practice tests on a Thursday. He's in the 'stars'. They call them that so that they don't feel stupid. God but I'm stupid. I should be in the 'stars'. Stupid name that. Don't you think? Might as well call them the stupids. That what they mean. Better to say nothing. Should have realised about Thursdays though. Soon as I did I thought I'd let you know. Now what I said last time isn't right."

NOT REPENDENT VALIDATION

Appendix 5.1

Random Example of Local Newspaper Coverage of Open Days/Nights



BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL
(Voluntary Grammar School)
740 Shore Road,
NEWTOWNABBEY,
BT37 0PX

OPEN NIGHTS

**Tuesday 25th and Wednesday
26th January 2000**

Pupils transferring in September 2000 and their parents
are cordially invited to attend and tour the School.

**The Headmaster will address those attending
at 7.15pm and 8.30pm**

10-TIMES, JANUARY 20, 2000

OPEN NIGHT

LARNE High School held its annual Transfer Evening last week, with Stuart Polley welcoming parents and transfer pupils to the school.

Those present were shown around the various facilities which the Sallagh Park School has to offer, and heard how Larne High was intending updating its computer facilities in the near future, with the most modern PCs being available.

The principal also outlined how GNVQ studies at the school had led to a number of students transferring directly to university, while success in other aspects of school life were also emphasised.

In his Open Day address the principal, the Very Reverend Patrick Delargy, welcomed parents and transfer pupils and outlined the challenges and rewards of the education they could expect at Garron Tower.

Fr. Delargy explained that the college catered for a range of ability and offered pupils a very broad curriculum, including a good range of extra-curricular activities.

While the academically gifted are challenged to excel, and do so, the less academic are given every encouragement to fulfil their potential, Fr. Delargy said.

"This is reflected in examination results," he added: "In 1999 over 97 per cent achieved A-C grades in five or more subjects at GCSE.



▲ Garron Tower 4th year students Jenny O'Brien and Louise McNeill show off their woodwork skills to some of the visitors at the college's open day on Sunday. BTS-114JC

400 visitors inspect college

"A remarkable 87 per cent were successful in seven subjects; excellent results which are comparable with those of more selective grammar schools."

The principal outlined the qualities one would expect to find in good students, citing high motivation, reasoning abilities, acceptance of responsibility, attentiveness, determination, extra-curricular interests and sound moral principles.